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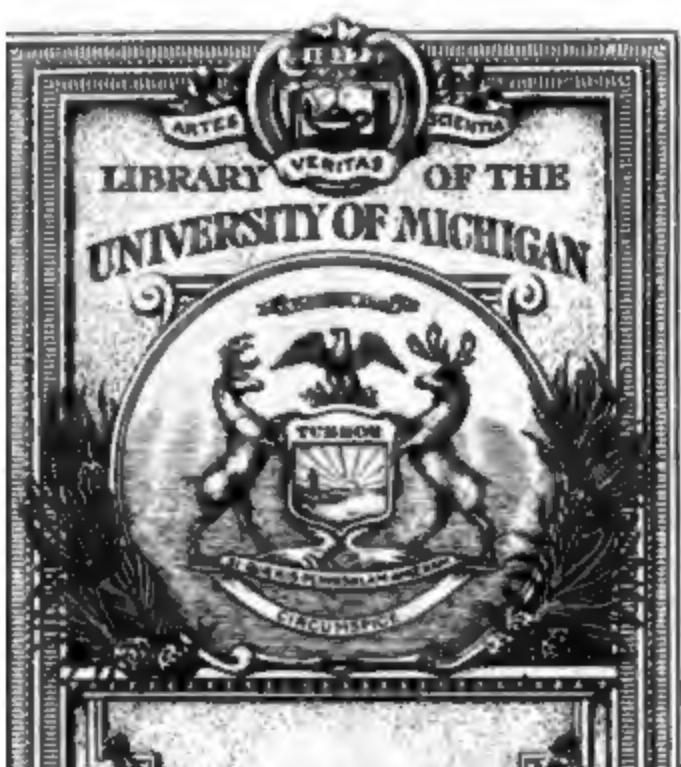
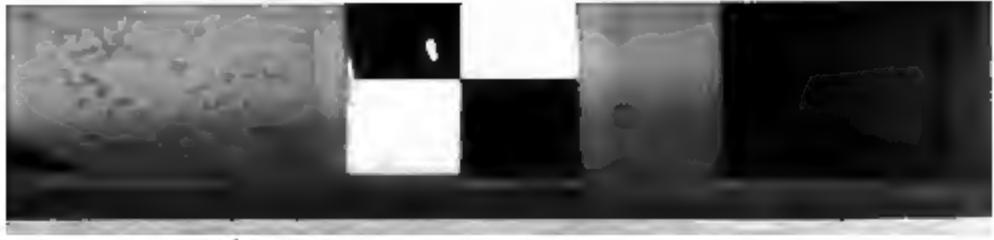
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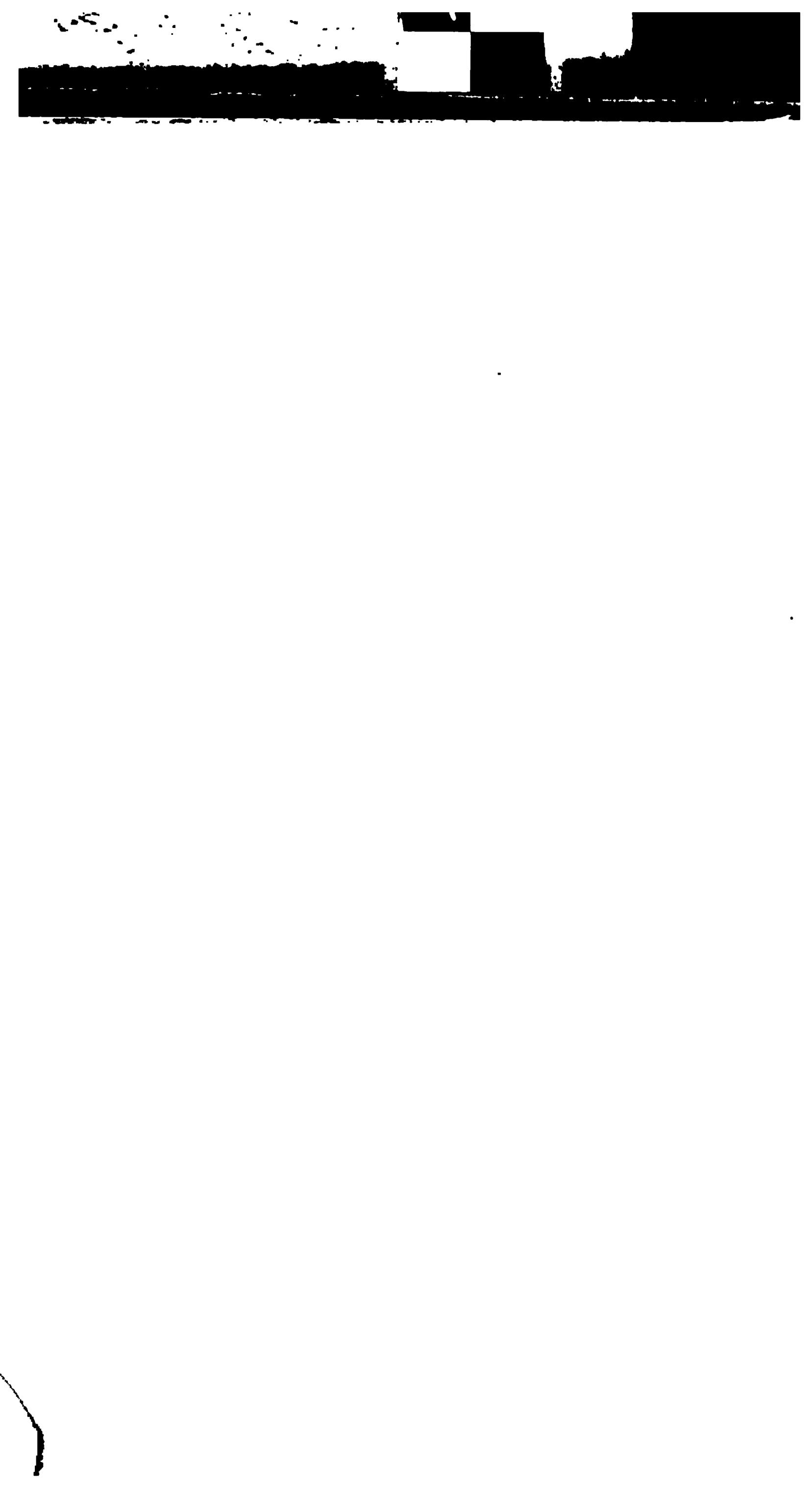




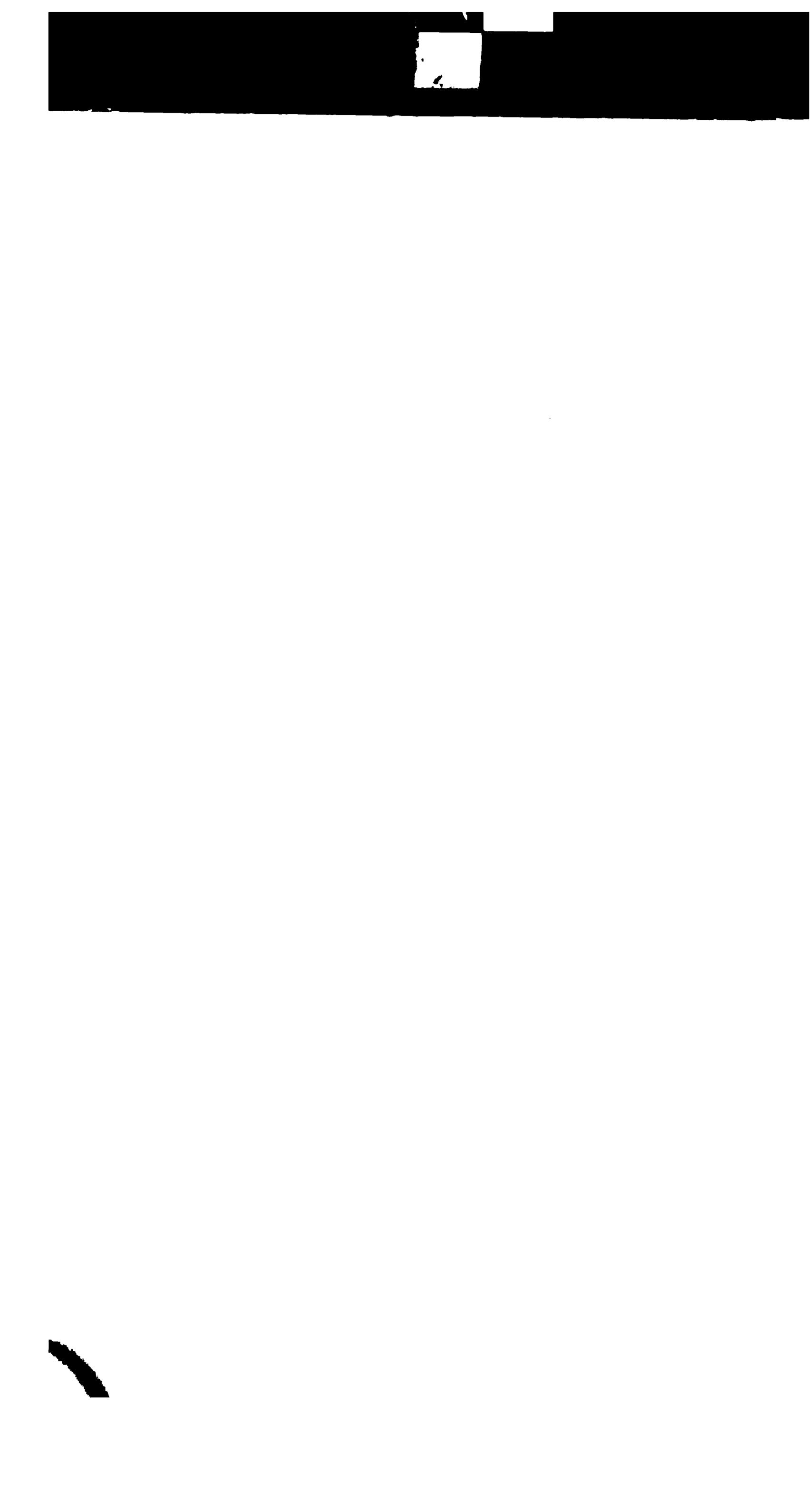


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## **THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**



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MCMVII.

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

*A SERIES OF LECTURES*

BY

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KINGSTON, CANADA

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## PREFACE

SIX of the lectures contained in this volume—the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, sixteenth and seventeenth—were delivered in April of this year before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn, U.S.A.; the two first were composed at the same time, and were intended to be introductory to the course; while the substance of the sixth, together with the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth were read some years ago to the Theological Alumni Association of the University with which I have the honour to be connected.

The lectures which constitute the body of this work are mainly essays in the reconstruction and history of religious belief. The importance of the problem and the pressing need of its solution will hardly be denied by any one who realizes the significance of the unrest and confusion of ideas which have invaded our modern life. The appeal to external authority in any form does not in our day carry conviction even to those who make it. Nothing short of a complete revision of current theological ideas, as I am convinced, can bring permanent satisfaction to our highly reflective age. I have

## PREFACE

therefore endeavoured to set forth, as simply and clearly as I could, the conception of life which commends itself to my own mind after the most careful thought.

The conditions under which the lectures were delivered made it necessary that I should avoid as far as possible all merely technical terms, and at the same time should not assume intimate familiarity on the part of the audience with the history and problems of philosophy. Convinced as I was that the theology of the future must take the form of a philosophy of religion, it was therefore impossible, in writing the lectures, to avoid a certain amount of philosophical exposition ; while, on the other hand, I should have defeated the object I had at heart, if I had burdened my pages with an excess of historical detail. I have therefore tried to combine freedom of movement with definiteness of thought.

The development of the religious consciousness in the past has been partly aided, and partly hindered, by its inevitable dependence upon external authority ; and, though the whole principle of authority was virtually overthrown at the beginning of the modern world with the Reformation and the Renaissance, there is now, as there always has been, a tendency to revive it, whenever a new movement of the secular consciousness seems to threaten the enfeeblement or extinction of traditional religious beliefs. In this way we may explain such ineffectual attempts to defend an obsolete point of view as that of Cardinal Newman, and in our own day of Mr. Balfour in his *Foundations*

*of Belief.* Therefore, in the two first lectures I have stated my reasons for dissatisfaction with the various attempts which have been made to base religion upon authority.

Granting that religion can find no real support in external authority, we are obviously under compulsion either to abandon all systematic thought in this region, or to rebuild our theological beliefs on the basis of reason. I have therefore attempted to deal with this question, in a general way, in the third and fourth lectures, which consist of an exposition of the Critical solution of the problem and the outline of an Idealism developed out of it by a firm application of the principle that the world is rational and is capable of being comprehended by us in virtue of the rationality which is our deepest and truest nature.

Having reached this point, we are met by two opposite philosophical schools of thought, which refuse to accept the solution of the problem thus advanced, or perhaps rather of what they mistakenly regard as that solution. In the fourth lecture will be found my reasons for rejecting both of these views,—the former because it virtually abolishes the rationality of the whole, the latter because it ignores the rationality of the parts.

So far the discussion has proceeded on the principle that a philosophy of religion is possible. There is, however, a very active school of thinkers who are averse to any philosophy of religion, or at least to any that claims to provide more than a working conception of life.

This is the topic dealt with in the sixth and seventh lectures, which endeavour to show that Professor James is led by his method to over-accentuate the personal aspect of religion and to fall back upon an empty "subliminal consciousness," while Professor Harnack misinterprets the history of Christianity by a mistaken identification of thought with abstract reflection, an identification which results in the exclusion of religious experience from the universal law of all experience.

The lectures which immediately follow, from the eighth to the fifteenth inclusive, are critical studies in the historical evolution of religious thought, intended to cover its main movements, and to show, in a concrete way, the process by which the religious consciousness has been gradually purified and enriched. Incidentally these studies may be taken to confirm the view, tacitly or expressly maintained in the whole course of lectures, that philosophy is a systematic formulation of the rational principles underlying all experience, and the philosophy of religion a systematic formulation of the single rational principle which differentiates itself in all experience and makes it a coherent whole, not a thing of shreds and patches.

This idea of a self-differentiating principle, which is the central thought of the whole course of lectures, is the special topic of the two last, in which an attempt is made to contrast the concrete idea of God, as the culmination of the whole enquiry, with the one-sided determination of His nature characteristic of Agnosticism, Mysticism and Pantheism, and to

show the bearing of the idea thus reached upon the interpretation of nature and of human life.

My obligations to Dr. Edward Caird, late Master of Balliol, I shall not attempt to estimate or express. In the two last lectures especially I am very greatly indebted to his *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, and, in a less degree, to his *Evolution of Religion*. For the use made of the material which he has supplied I am of course alone responsible. I have also found an article by Professor J. S. Mackenzie, in *Mind* for July, 1906, on "The New Realism and the Old Idealism," of great assistance in the preparation of Lecture Fifth. Of the books on Philo, mentioned in the Appendix, I owe most to Dr. Drummond's *Philo-Judaeus*, Maier's *Des Juden Philo Buch von der Weltschöpfung*, and Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*. Professor Harnack's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Flügel's *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften*, Dorner's *Augustinus*, and Nourrisson's *La Philosophie de Saint Augustin* have been of great service to me in dealing with Augustine and his relations to Manichaeism and Neoplatonism. In the statement of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas I have found Stöckl's *Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* an invaluable guide. To my colleague, Professor John Macnaughton, recent Croall Lecturer, I owe the improvement of several passages in the translations from Philo, Irenaeus and Hippolytus. By the courtesy of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. I am enabled to include the lecture on "Leibnitz

## PREFACE

and Protestant Theology," which originally appeared in the *New World*. To the other works cited in the Notes I am more or less indebted, while various articles in the *Hibbert Journal* have served as an index of current theological thought. I hope that the somewhat full analysis of the Contents may be useful.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY,  
CANADA, 26th October, 1907.

## CONTENTS

### LECTURE FIRST

#### RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

	PAGE
Importance and difficulty of the Philosophy of Religion. Method followed is to examine typical ways of conceiving the world with a view to a higher synthesis, .	1
Religion at once a life, a creed and a ritual ; but, as any one of these constituents may be accentuated, there are three main types of religious philosophy. The lectures first consider that sub-division of the second type which bases religion on Authority, . . . . .	3
Christian dogma inevitable, because Christianity had to satisfy men nourished on Greek philosophy, and was required as the unifying bond of the Church ; just as, conversely, the Church was needed to guarantee dogma. Hence the early view of Authority, which must now be modified to seem even plausible. Cardinal Newman the first to propound the modern view, . . . .	6
Newman's theory of development right in holding that there is an intellectual element in faith, and in denying that the religious consciousness is created by dogma ; wrong in not recognizing that reflection enriches faith ; as also in viewing doctrine as a "symbol" of faith, and faith as a "symbol" of truth, . . . .	9
The problem of the comprehension of the Infinite must be faced. The solution does away with Newman's plea for the Authority of the Church, . . . . .	18

## CONTENTS

## LECTURE SECOND

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA

	PAGE
<b>Summary of Lecture First, . . . . .</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Dr. Wilfrid Ward's new defence of Authority : (1) we • recognize the authority of experts in science and history ; (2) the intuitions and reflections of men of religious genius have a peculiar authority ; (3) the Church does not originate, but merely sanctions, true ideas ; (4) as organic the human race requires a special organ of religion, . . . . .</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Weakness of the defence : (1) the authority of experts rests upon the rationality of the universe and the identity of reason in all men ; (2) the man of genius has no authority other than deeper insight ; (3) the authority of the Church is ultimately the authority of reason ; (4) the same principle is present in all members of the human race, not confined to religious “experts” ; hence the true Church is the ideal Church, not a special organisation, . . . . .</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Abbé Loisy, applying the results of modern science to scripture and dogma, opposes Harnack's reduction of Christianity to a few simple truths, but, ultimately, he falls back on Authority, on the ground that by reason man cannot attain to a knowledge of God, . . . .</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Untenability of this view, . . . . .</b>	<b>42</b>

## LECTURE THIRD

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION

<b>Summary of Lecture Second, . . . . .</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>The rejection of Authority throws us back on Reason as the only basis of morality and religion, . . . .</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Sketch of the development of thought from the Sixteenth Century till the age of Kant, . . . . .</b>	<b>50</b>

## CONTENTS

xiii

	PAGE
Kant accepts the inviolability of natural law, but seeks to defend God, Freedom and Immortality. As the method of the sciences is constructive, so the mind constitutes the system of nature, and therefore is not subject to it. Nor is that system self-complete, as is proved by the contradictions which arise when nature is confused with ultimate reality. As our experience is only of phenomena, there is a possibility that in our inner or noumenal nature we may be free; a possibility which is converted into certainty by our consciousness of moral law, which compels us to postulate freedom, immortality and God, . . . .	54

### LECTURE FOURTH

#### IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Summary of Lecture Third, . . . . .	72
Kant has refuted the old dualism of subject and object, but has given occasion for a new dualism. His problem not psychological but speculative. He rightly holds the identity of intelligence, but destroys the force of his contention by opposing experience to reality. Origin and untenability of the opposition. The system of nature but a partial determination of a rational self-determinant and spiritual universe. The opposition of faith and knowledge not necessary in the defence of man's higher interests, and disappears when the higher side of the Critical Philosophy is developed, . . . . .	75

### LECTURE FIFTH

#### PERSONAL IDEALISM AND THE NEW REALISM

Summary of Lecture Fourth, . . . . .	100
Herbert Spencer's Philosophy of Religion unsatisfactory, .	101
Personal Idealism opposes Monism, and insists upon Personality as distinctive of man and God. In meeting objections, it admits God to be limited in power, .	102

<b>Contrast of Personal and Speculative Idealism.</b> The former is self-contradictory in identifying knowledge with "ideas" in an individual mind and yet affirming the existence of other minds. The distinction of "idea" and "content" does not avoid the contradiction. God, as confined to his own "ideas," can neither know nor will anything, . . . . .	<b>PAGE</b>
	108
<b>The New Realism a protest against Personal Idealism.</b> It maintains that "ideas" and "objects" are fundamentally different: (1) the "idea" of a sensible thing is not the thing itself; (2) the feeling of hunger is not the state of hunger; (3) the thought that $2+2=4$ is not the truth that $2+2=4$ , . . . . .	113
<b>The New Realism</b> right in opposing the reduction of reality to "ideas," wrong in opposing "ideas" and "objects" and thus endorsing the mistake of its opponent. Speculative Idealism maintains: (1) that the conditions of the existence of an external object are the same as the conditions of knowledge; (2) that the feeling of hunger differs from the state of hunger as the sensitive to the non-sensitive; (3) that mathematical judgments are not based on "ideas" as "images" but on "universals," which express true though limited aspects of reality. The realist overlooks the spiritual character of the universe. Answer to the difficulty that prior to life and intelligence inorganic nature existed. The absolute not a mere "ideal," . . . . .	115

## LECTURE SIXTH

<b>THE INTERPRETATION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE</b>	
<b>Summary Statement of Speculative Idealism,</b> . . . . .	136
<b>First Type of religious theory</b> that which accentuates the personal aspect of religion. Professor James as the representative of the "psychological" subdivision of it. Great value of his "Varieties of Religious Experience" as a collection of psychological data, . . . . .	137

## CONTENTS

xv

	PAGE
Development of Philosophy since Kant in England : Herbert Spencer, T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley, . . . . .	138
"Pragmatism" as a method of defending religion. It rests upon two untenable assumptions ; (1) that nothing is verifiable except "scientific" fact ; (2) that there is an absolute opposition of faith and knowledge, . . . . .	141
James, in his philosophy of religion, falls back on the "subliminal consciousness," and reduces the object of religion to "something larger than ourselves," or perhaps a "collection" of finite selves. This concep- tion of religion results in an abstraction, and ignores the higher elements of religious experience. Thus St. Paul is admitted to be a religious genius because of his "visions" instead of his "prophecy." The "sub-conscious" life really lower than the conscious. The sense in which "experience" is the basis of religion, . . . . .	149
Note on the Pragmatic conception of Truth, . . . . .	158

## LECTURE SEVENTH

### CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

First Type of religion, second subdivision : Professor Harnack the representative of the "historical" view. His kinship with Professor James. His doctrine con- nected with that of Ritschl, himself a follower of Schleiermacher, . . . . .	165
--	-----

The history of dogma is for Harnack an obscuration and "secularization" of the essence of religion, as found in Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Religion is a life, not a doctrine. Aim of the historian is to discover the kernel of religion by an examination of the facts of history. This kernel consists in the "Kingdom of God" as present here and now : of God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul ; of the higher righteousness and the New Commandment of love, . . . . .	167
--	-----

While religion may exist without abstract conceptions, Harnack is wrong in assuming that it excludes all conceptions. Thought is only an element in the religious consciousness, but so also are feeling and will. Harnack virtually admits the function of thought when he makes religion imply "the reality of God the Father." A purely historical investigation will not reveal the "essence" of Christianity, but only a philo- sophical enquiry. Religion not an unchanging "kernel," but a living principle ; hence religious experience grows ever richer. Illustration from early, as compared with modern, Christianity, . . . . .	PAGE 168
---	-------------

## LECTURE EIGHTH

## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Summary of Lecture Seventh, . . . . .	190
Philo an eclectic in philosophy. Difficulty of determining his influence on New Testament writers, . . . . .	193
In his <i>De Mundi Opificio</i> Philo assumes that the Penta- teuch is a final revelation of truth, and contains a complete philosophy. By his use of the allegorical method he reconciles Moses and Plato. Origin and temporary value of the method, . . . . .	196
Philo's theory of creation a transformation of the Jewish conception under the influence of Greek thought. He denies the eternity of the world, while maintaining the eternity of formless matter. He has a clear idea of the limits of the "design" argument, but virtually assumes two opposite principles, God and "matter." Employs the "cosmological" argument. Interprets the Mosaic account of creation as implying a distinction between the ideal or archetypal world and the visible universe. The divine powers, ideas and reason are inseparable, but the visible universe only partially manifests God's goodness, not his whole nature. Philo extracts from scripture a theory of the order of rank in the parts of the ideal world, . . . . .	200

## CONTENTS

xvii

Three main ideas in Philo : (1) the absoluteness of God ; (2) the divine Logos ; (3) the visible creation, including man. God in his inner nature held to be for us incomprehensible, inexpressible and without qualities, because Finite and Infinite are incommensurable. Self-contradictory character of this doctrine, . . .	PAGE 213
---	-------------

## LECTURE NINTH

### PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT (CONCLUDED)

Summary of Lecture Eighth, . . . . .	217
--------------------------------------	-----

The Logos in Philo: its two-fold meaning. The macrocosm and the microcosm. How Philo would reconcile the inscrutability of God with man's knowledge of Him. The Logos is (1) the Word, (2) the instrument of God in the creation of the world, (3) eternally begotten, not made, (4) the first-born Son, (5) the man of God, (6) the heavenly man, (7) the second God, (8) the Mediator, (9) the Intercessor, (10) the High Priest, (11) the bread from heaven, (12) the living stream, (13) the flaming sword, or "cutter," (14) the cloud at the Red Sea, (15) the Rock; all of which appear in the New Testament. The Logos in Philo is not a Person. It is identified with the Law, subjection to which is freedom, and which is the convincer of sin,	221
--	-----

Philo holds the pre-existence and independence of the soul, and regards the body as the source of evil, though not in itself evil. As the soul has two parts, so there are men who live in the flesh and men who live in the spirit. Man being by nature corrupt, a virtuous life is of no avail without the grace of God. Besides the four cardinal virtues, there are the three graces of faith, hope and love. The Jewish ceremonial law is of perpetual obligation, . . . . .	230
---	-----

Philo, St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews partly agree in their method. There are also similarities of expression. But there seems to be no borrowing, and the whole spirit and outlook on life are different. Comparison of Philo with St. Paul and St. John, . . . . .	233
---	-----

## LECTURE TENTH

## GNOSTIC THEOLOGY

	PAGE
Summary of Lecture Ninth, . . . . .	248
Irenaeus' characterisation of the Gnostics. They are less unchristian and irrational than he supposes: nor did they pervert the accepted doctrine, but made an honest attempt to defend Christianity. Encratites, Docetists and Carpocratians may be neglected, . . . . .	251
I. Judaic Gnosticism claimed hidden wisdom, exclusive mysteries and special illumination; attributed the work of creation to angels; and advocated asceticism. How Cerinthus differs from the Ebionites, . . . . .	258
II. Hellenic Gnosticism, under the influence of Greek ideas and the allegorical method, transformed Christianity into a mystical philosophy. Starting from the preconception that God is absolutely complete in Himself apart from the world, its results are unsatisfactory, . . . . .	264
Valentinus holds that before all created being there existed the Father or Depth; alone, uncreated, without place or time, unrelated to any other being, at once indeterminate and infinitely determinate, . . . . .	269
Basilides maintained that "the God that was not" willed to make a world; at least so we must express ourselves, though no human language can really express the truth. How Basilides is led to deny thought, perception and will of God. Logical result of that denial, . . . . .	270

## LECTURE ELEVENTH

## GNOSTIC THEOLOGY (CONCLUDED)

Hellenic Gnosticism solves the problem of evil by interposing a series of "aeons" or "powers" between God and the world. Valentinus makes them dual, Basilides single, and both distinguish the Pleroma from the visible universe, the latter being the product of the

## CONTENTS

xix

	PAGE
Demiurge. Basilides combines the two ideas of creation and development in his doctrine of the "cosmical seed." He holds a threefold Sonship. His view of the relation between Judaism and Christianity. Evil he traces back to the spiritual Powers, and salvation he conceives as a special illumination or Gnosis. Jesus not the heavenly Christ. The Church rightly rejected the separation of the human and divine. The ethics of Hellenic Gnosticism either ascetic or antinomian, . . . . .	278
III. Syriac Gnosticism was unaffected by Greek philosophy and was of a practical character, . . . . .	294
<i>The Acts of Thomas</i> unspeculative both in form and in content: it indicates a belief in angels, devils and demoniac possession, and in the magical virtue of the dust of St. Thomas; inculcates asceticism on the ground of the evil nature of matter; is infected with mysticism; and denies the knowability of the spiritual world, . . . . .	295
The treatise of Philip, a disciple of Bardaisan, though it is infected with dualism, shows some speculative power in its reconciliation of nature, fate and free-will, . . . . .	297

## LECTURE TWELFTH

### AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH

Augustine's influence partly due to the process of religious experience through which he passed, . . . . .	299
Cicero's <i>Hortensius</i> awakened him to a higher view of life, though it disappointed him by the absence of Christian ideas, . . . . .	300
Turning to Scripture, he was repelled by its anthropomorphism, not having as yet found a solvent in the allegorical method, . . . . .	300
His next phase was faith in Manichaeism. Relation of Manichaeism, Neoplatonism and Catholic Christianity. Source of the popularity of Manichaeism. It confuses	
b 2	

	PAGE
the natural and the spiritual, and sets up two antagonistic kingdoms of good and evil, placing Satan at the head of the latter. Though he is made in the image of Satan man has elements of good in him. The prophets, including Jesus, St. Paul and Mani himself, descended into the world to save man. Manichaeism ascetic in its ethics. Orders of the Manichaean community. Augustine attracted by its denial of anthropomorphism, its apparent solution of the problem of evil and free will, its high estimate of reason, and its asceticism, . . . . .	301
<b>Augustine's misapplication of Aristotle's Categories the beginning of Scholasticism, . . . . .</b>	<b>308</b>
In an aesthetic treatise Augustine characterizes the beautiful as involving the contrast of opposites, and applies the distinction to the universe at large, . . . . .	308
By his study of astronomy Augustine's belief in Manichaeism was weakened, and he fell back on a dogmatic scepticism, . . . . .	310
Influenced by Ambrose, he rejected Manichaeism, and adopted Neoplatonism, . . . . .	311
Neoplatonism the euthanasia of Greek philosophy. Its historical phases. Plotinus seeks to answer two questions : (1) How does the Absolute reveal itself? (2) How does man apprehend the Absolute? To the first he answers, "through emanations"; to the second, "in a divine ecstasy," . . . . .	315
His five-fold division of Being. The Absolute indefinable. As a pure energy it produces that which is distinct from itself, but an "image" of itself. Grades of being determined by the degree of remoteness from it. The emanations are : (1) The <i>Noûs</i> , (2) the world soul, (3) the phenomenal world, (4) matter. Spiritual life the ascent to the Absolute, its ultimate stage consisting in absorption in it. Adaptation of Neoplatonism to popular religion ; especially by Amelius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, . . . . .	317

## CONTENTS

xxi

	PAGE
<b>Augustine attracted by the Neoplatonic idea of God as spirit, by its doctrine of the Logos, by its high conception of the soul, and by its apparent reconciliation of evil with the perfection of God, . . . . .</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Learning from experience that Neoplatonism did not destroy the power of the passions, Augustine turned to Scripture, and found in the doctrine of the Incarnation the revelation of the inner nature of God and the desiderated means of transforming the whole nature, . . . . .</b>	<b>326</b>
<b>Summary of Augustine's phases of faith, . . . . .</b>	<b>327</b>

## LECTURE THIRTEENTH

### AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGY

<b>Augustine gave Christian Theology a Neoplatonic colouring. His two main ideas are <i>God</i> and <i>sin</i>. . . . .</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>God essentially self-manifesting. Defence of the Trinity: each "person" expresses a special "function," just as the mind of man is one and yet has the three "functions" of memory, intelligence and will. God rather apprehended by intuition, than comprehended by thought. Augustine insists upon the unity of God, as an answer to Manichaeism, almost at the expense of the distinction of the three "persons," . . . . .</b>	<b>332</b>
<b>Creation according to a divine plan. Difficulty of Augustine's view. His defence of the idea of "creation out of nothing." No succession in the divine will, for God is unchangeable, and only the changeable is subject to time. Nor is God extended, for space is relative to body, . . . . .</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>The creation and preservation of the world identical in essence. Two different views of providence in Augustine, . . . . .</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Relation of man to God: Adam originally good, but capable of sin, since he had the power to refuse the aid of God. Self-assertion connected with the</b>	

	PAGE
negative element in man. Adam's sin at once <i>privatio boni</i> and <i>superbia</i> . Augustine's doctrine contrasted with that of Pelagius. The consequences of Adam's sin are: (1) that his posterity have lost the power to will the divine aid, and (2) participate in his guilt. Augustine's attempts to reconcile his view of human freedom with the divine sovereignty by the idea of harmony, . . . . .	341
Augustine's doctrine of divine grace. The essence of faith is the consciousness of sin and grace. Christ frees man from sin, guilt and punishment, and restores him to his original state of purity, by giving His own blood as a ransom to the devil for man's guilt, . . . .	345
Augustine's doctrine of Predestination the logical result of his view of the Fall. He tries to reconcile it with human activity by saying that there are means of grace which are necessary to the realization of the divine will, though not from the divine point of view, . . . . .	347
Great influence of Augustine on his age, especially through his conception of sin and grace. He first formulated the doctrine of the authority of the Church, but he also insisted upon the necessity of direct communion with God, . . . . .	348
(1) In his doctrine of the Trinity Augustine expresses the fundamental principle of Christianity, but he fails to grasp the unity-in-distinction of God, . . . . .	353
(2) In his doctrine of the divine purpose, Augustine does not succeed in reconciling the completeness of God's knowledge, apart from the idea of the world, with the necessity of the idea of the world to its completeness, . . . . .	355
(3) Nor does his theory of creation explain how God can be complete prior to the existence of the world, while yet the world has its own reality, . . . . .	356
His view of time and space leads to a similar difficulty, .	357

## CONTENTS

xxiii

	PAGE
(4) Augustine's doctrine of Sin unsatisfactory, because it gives man the power to will evil but not good, and thus destroys moral responsibility, . . . . .	358
(5) Truth and error in the Augustinian doctrine of Predestination, . . . . .	360

## LECTURE FOURTEENTH

### MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY

Medieval Christianity unfavourable to independent speculation. In its first stage largely devoted to the logical problem of universals ; in its second stage to the formulation of the medieval ideal of the universal sovereignty of the Church, . . . . .	362
---	-----

Thomas Aquinas seeks to reconcile faith in authority with reason. He opposes Reason and Revelation, Knowledge and Faith, Philosophy and Theology ; attempting to maintain their independence, while affirming their harmony. In explaining the grades of being he employs the Aristotelian distinction of "form" and "matter." He affirms the primacy of the intellect, and holds that the good is commanded by God because it is good, . . . . .	367
---	-----

The theology of Thomas follows the articles of faith. Intuition, Faith and Knowledge are different modes of apprehending God, whose existence is a truth at once of reason and of revelation. Thomas rejects the ontological argument, but employs the cosmological and physico-theological. The doctrine of the Trinity is a truth of revelation, not of reason ; but in the world, and especially in man, there are traces of the divine nature, which yield analogies to it ; the Son being the "procession" of God's thought of Himself, the Holy Spirit the "procession" of His love of Himself, . . .	375
---	-----

The fact of creation Thomas holds to be demonstrable, but the creation of the world out of nothing is an article of faith, though it admits of "probable" proof. He defends the providence of God, but denies that	
--	--

infinite goodness demands the creation of a perfect world. He tries to reconcile evil and free-will with providence. His doctrine of the Fall and of redemption, . . . . .	<b>PAGE</b>
	380
Thomas' doctrine, that the Sacraments are the instruments of grace, is the strongest support of the Church, which he identifies with the mystical person of Christ, . . . . .	389
The Papacy essential to the preservation of the unity of the faith, on which the unity of the Church depends. The Church may punish heretics and apostates with death, . . . . .	390
Contrast of medieval and modern thought, . . . . .	395

### LECTURE FIFTEENTH

#### LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

Luther and Descartes as representatives of the modern spirit. Spinoza substitutes Philosophy for Theology. Leibnitz seeks to reconcile them, . . . . .	398
The post-Reformation Theology : the Augsburg Confession, Socinus, Melanchthon and Calvin, . . . . .	400
The Cartesian and Spinozistic conceptions of God, . . . . .	402
The <i>Theodicee</i> of Leibnitz : Relations of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity. Truths of faith and truths of reason. The latter divide into necessary and contingent truths. Answer to Bayle's difficulties, . . . . .	404
Natural Theology : Human freedom and divine sovereignty reconciled in the doctrine that God has created the best of all possible worlds. Distinction between <i>permitting</i> and <i>willing</i> evil. The principles of Contradiction and Determinant Reason. The pre-established harmony as reconciling freedom and providence. Physical evil the condition of greater good, . . . . .	413
Untenability of the Leibnitzian oppositions of natural and revealed religion, necessary and contingent truth, possibility and actuality, . . . . .	424

## CONTENTS

xxv

### LECTURE SIXTEENTH GOD AND THE WORLD

	PAGE
Short summary of the idealistic view of the world. Result of the historical enquiry, . . . . .	430
How Speculative Idealism is distinguished from Agnosticism and Personal Idealism, . . . . .	431
Mysticism separates God from the world and from man's ordinary consciousness, with the result that all positive knowledge of God is denied. Contrast of Mysticism and Agnosticism. Agreement and contrast of Mysticism and Idealism, . . . . .	434
Pantheism essentially different from the idealistic conception of God, . . . . .	440

### LECTURE SEVENTEENTH GOD AND MAN

Mysticism, in separating the Finite from the Infinite, leads to a false conception of good and evil. Plotinus regards evil as a perversion of the craving for unity with the Absolute, due to the animal appetites. Regeneration is possible by liberation from self, and the ascent, through the practice of virtue, first to pure contemplation and finally to "ecstasy," . . . . .	448
Logical consequences of Mysticism: degradation of the Infinite and an insuperable conflict of morality and religion. Plotinus wrongly identifies self-will with the pursuit of definite ends, and is therefore led to conceive of the highest life as immersion in an indefinable Absolute. Augustine perceived the fundamental defect of Neo-platonism, . . . . .	449
Pantheism denies the existence of evil, explaining it to be due to the illusory influence of imagination, which represents the part as if it were the whole. This doctrine is self-contradictory and untenable, . . . . .	454

Idealism maintains that evil is real, but is not absolute. The perfection of the whole is not incompatible with the freedom and imperfection of the parts. The process of evil is necessary in a spiritual universe. The regeneration of man implies the immanence of the divine spirit in him, together with the free response of his own spirit to its intimations ; which means, that evil is overcome in so far as the individual makes the guilt of all his own, and so appropriates the good of all. Christianity is the reconciliation of morality and religion, . . . . .	PAGE
	457

## APPENDIX

I. Books on Philo, . . . . .	467
II. Extracts from Philo, . . . . .	468
III. Extract from the Septuagint, Gen. I. . . . .	479
INDEX, . . . . .	480



## **THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**



## LECTURE FIRST

### RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

THE attempt to deal in a short course of lectures with a problem so difficult and comprehensive as the philosophy of religion will appear, I am afraid, bold to the verge of rashness. Not only is there much dispute as to what constitutes religion, and an equally great variety of opinion in regard to the nature and the claims of philosophy, but these divergencies concern what the disputants feel to be so vital and fundamental, that they find it almost impossible to maintain that attitude of impartiality which is necessary to the solution of the problem. [We shall probably all agree that a man's religion, as the expression of his total attitude to life, is that which gives meaning and direction to all that he thinks and feels and does; and that his philosophy, whether it assumes an articulate and systematic form or simply constitutes the spiritual atmosphere in which he lives, expresses his deepest and most cherished convictions. There is, therefore, always a danger that one may inadvertently stir up the ashes of former controversy and liberate the fierce fires which glow beneath. I can hardly expect to be so fortunate as not to say something which runs counter to some heartfelt conviction of

## **2 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

those who hear me, and my only defence must be that which Aristotle urged in explanation of his attack upon Plato, that truth must be held dearer than friendship. If only we are resolved to know the truth, even if that should compel us to abandon or modify opinions that we have long held to be beyond dispute, it does not seem unreasonable to hope that we may at least come to a general agreement in regard to the greatest of all interests, the interest of our religious life. Though the problems dealt with in the philosophy of religion are in one sense harder of solution than ever before, in another sense their solution was never more simple. Their solution is harder, because of the very intensity with which men now throw themselves into some special pursuit, and the consequent difficulty they experience in estimating the claims of other pursuits ; it is easier, because, by the inevitable progress of science and historical criticism, the dogmatic attitude of an earlier age has been superseded, or at least modified, and thus the combatants are in a better frame of mind for the construction of a more comprehensive doctrine. I propose, then, to ask what conclusions may be reached by a careful and impartial interpretation of the facts of religious experience. In attempting to carry out this programme, it will be advisable to pass in review various typical ways of conceiving the world, with the object of determining how far they can be regarded as satisfactory. In examining these views I hope to avoid the merely polemical spirit, a spirit which is fatal to the discovery of truth, and to have a single eye for whatever of permanent value they contain. No doubt I might have ignored all the views which I am unable to accept in their integrity, and simply set forth what I conceive to be

a true philosophy of religion. But, though much may be said in favour of this method, it seems to me to have two main defects: in the first place, it does not sufficiently come home to those who have been accustomed to hold a different set of beliefs; and, in the second place, it ignores the important truth, that the value of philosophy in all cases, and especially the value of the philosophy of religion, lies to a large extent, on the one hand, in giving to the various elements of truth their due weight, and, on the other hand, in bringing them together in a more comprehensive whole.

✓ What is religion? However this question may be answered, it will hardly be denied that religion contains three elements, which may be distinguished from one another, but which yet are inseparable. In the first place, religion is not a mere theory, but a life: it is a living personal expression of what is believed to be the highest form of activity of which a man is capable. It must not be assumed that this distinctive note of the religious consciousness is necessarily in contradiction with the co-existence in the same individual of a theory or system of religion; all that need be held is, that, whether such a theory is constructed or not, at least there must be a direct and effective consciousness which in some way transforms a man's whole nature. In the second place, religion implies a belief in something higher than any given object of sense, and higher than any finite subject. Whether this belief is ultimately justifiable, or has no higher guarantee than its power of lifting the life of the individual to a higher plane, I do not at present enquire; but it will hardly be denied that, with the elimination of the belief in something that may be called divine, the whole influence of religion

## 4 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

would be gone. No man can look on the world with "other larger eyes," or preserve his enthusiasm for higher things, after his faith in the divine has been destroyed. Lastly, religion expresses itself in certain peculiar acts, sometimes called religious, and these acts, as it may perhaps be fairly claimed, are at least of service as the external signs or symbols of religious emotion, even if they are not, as some contend, essential to the very existence and vitality of the religious life.<sup>1</sup> Religion, then, to sum up, is at once a life, a creed, and a ritual.

Now, while it will be generally, if not universally, conceded, that all three elements are essential to religion in its completeness, there may be very great variation in the degree of importance attached to each. To one who regards religion mainly as a life, creed and ritual will naturally seem of very subordinate value; and he may even go so far as to say that any definitely formulated creed is not only unessential, but is positively prejudicial to the fulness and vitality of the religious life; while to ritual he will either be indifferent, or will seek to reduce it to its barest and simplest form. The dislike of system is shown in many ways, ranging from the contention that the truths of religion may be all summed up in the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of man, to the denial of all objective truth and the substitution of any belief that gives satisfaction to the individual who holds it; but, whatever form it assumes, it is characteristic of this mode of thought, that it views religion almost entirely as the direct and spontaneous expression of the spirit.

Very different is the conception of religion held by those who attach most importance to the content of faith. For them religion is no doubt a life, but it

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

5

is a life nourished and sustained by beliefs which are fundamentally true. No belief, as they contend, can have a permanent influence upon a rational being which does not correspond to the actual nature of things. The bare suggestion that its value is based upon, or at least is to be decided purely by, its influence upon the life and character of the individual, seems to them preposterous and immoral. What right, they ask, has any one to believe what cannot in some way be proved to be in harmony with the ultimate nature of things? and how can the belief in what is false by any possibility minister to the higher life, unless truth and goodness are in hopeless disharmony with each other? To minds of this type, therefore, a clearly formulated system of ideas is a necessity. They do not deny that religion is personal, but they maintain that unless the beliefs of the individual are true, his life will not be that to which man is fitted, and was meant, to attain. Agreeing in this general contention, representatives of this view of religion may yet differ fundamentally in regard to the foundation of religious belief; some appealing to the authority of a church, or of scripture, others to the self-evidencing power of reason. In the one case, religious truth is conceived to be formulated in a definite creed or collection of dogmas, in the other to consist in a science or philosophy of religion.

Still another attitude towards religion is assumed by those who lay great stress upon the rites and ceremonies in which religion is outwardly expressed. The representatives of this view do not deny that their tendency is to identify the religious life with the performance of so-called "religious" acts, and to value the creed less in itself than as the authoritative constitution imposed by the Church.

## 6 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

In these lectures I do not propose to deal with this last type of thought. It seems enough to say, that whatever value may be ascribed to ritual, there can be no vital religion which does not express itself in a life, or which cannot be formulated in a definite system of ideas. Nor would any high-minded sacerdotalist deny the truth of the statement that "pure ritual and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world," though he might add that it also included the performance of the religious acts enjoined by the Church. There remain to be considered the other two types of thought: that which attaches predominant importance to religion as a life, and tends to minimize the value of doctrine, and that which insists upon the supreme importance of true belief as the indispensable condition of the religious life. It will be convenient to begin with the latter, and first of all with the view which bases the truth of religious beliefs upon the authority of a particular Church. The special form of this doctrine which I propose to consider is that which was first clearly expressed by Cardinal Newman, and has since been endorsed by some of the most distinguished and enlightened exponents of the Roman Church; but it is practically accepted by all those representatives of other churches, who seek to base the doctrines of religion on authority. I shall therefore endeavour to determine the element of truth which is contained in the appeal to an authority other than that of the individual consciousness.

The Christian religion, as it finds expression in the New Testament, is not as yet a system of doctrine, though no doubt in the epistles of St. Paul and in the fourth Gospel the beginning of the reflective

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

7

process is already apparent. When we consider, however, that this reflective process was essential to the liberation of the principle of Christianity from the accidents of its Jewish origin and to its triumph over the pagan conception of life to which it was opposed, we can hardly accept the view of Renan and others, that the transition from its first intuitive form to its later reflective form was an inevitable but melancholy degradation. What leads these writers to look at all systematic thought about religion as doing violence to its original simplicity and power is mainly a confusion between dogma, in the sense of a number of propositions based upon external authority, and a reasoned doctrine which claims no other support than its own inherent truth. But these two forms of reflection are widely different from each other. In the former, the assumption is virtually made that truth is not self-evidencing, but depends for its validity upon the attestation of an external witness ; while the latter claims to be but the explicit formulation of the rational system already implicit in the intuition of its founder. That the rise of dogma was inevitable becomes apparent when we consider the antagonists that Christianity had to meet and overcome. The early community of Christians soon contained among its members men whose minds had been nourished on Greek philosophy ; and for such men it was a simple necessity to reconcile their faith with their intelligence. The fourth Gospel, by representing Christ as the Eternal Word, which yet manifested itself in an ordinary human life, gave rise to a problem which could only be solved for the intellect by the adaptation of ideas borrowed from Greek philosophy to the content of Christian faith ; and there was a certain want of harmony between the form and the

## 8 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

matter to which it was applied, that resulted in the conversion of the large intuitions of primitive Christianity into "mysteries"; which no doubt preserved the various elements of the original intuition, but at the same time held them together in a more or less arbitrary and mechanical way. Moreover, a certain amount of dogma was required to serve as the unifying principle of a society which found itself in an alien world, and which yet claimed to regulate the lives of men in their whole compass; and, on the other hand, such a society was necessary to give authority to the dogmas. As a natural result we find in the fourth century a complete system of doctrine, implicit belief in which was held by the Church to be essential to salvation. The dogma, as it was held, expressed mainly what was contained in scripture, but the truth of scripture had itself to be guaranteed by the authority of the Church. "*Ego vero evangelio non crederem,*" says Augustine, "*nisi me catholicae ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas.*" And indeed this view was inevitable, for when the original intuition was no longer experienced in its overwhelming power and vividness, and as yet an indirect path back to it had not been found through free and untrammelled speculation, the truth half hidden in dogma must for the time either get its support from external authority or be lost to the world.

This glance at the origin of Christian dogma may perhaps enable us to realize the form in which the principle of authority first presents itself. That form is as yet naive and unsophisticated. It is assumed that the Church is but the divinely appointed instrument for the simple transmission of "the faith once delivered to the saints." No doubt conceptions borrowed from Greek philosophy are freely used,

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

9

but it is assumed that their application to the truths of religion in no way affects their sense. The principle of authority, however, obviously requires modification, if it is still to be maintained after nineteen centuries of progress. More particularly, it must be brought into harmony with the fact, that not only secular knowledge, but the dogmas of the Church themselves, have undergone development. The first thinker to recognize the necessity of reconciling the progress of theology with the principle of authority was Cardinal Newman, who, in his famous "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," advanced a view which with a certain modification is still relied upon by the most advanced thinkers of the Romish Church, and indeed by all theologians who believe at once in authority and progress.

The Bible, as Newman points out, is neither the repository of a definite system of doctrines, nor does it contain a single unchanging set of ideas. The former supposition is due to the natural but indefensible tendency to read into the words of scripture a meaning which they do not really bear, and the latter to ignorance of development within the Bible itself through the prophets to Jesus, whose words are in their turn developed by the Apostles. No doubt "the whole truth, or large portions of it, are told, yet only in their rudiments, or in miniature; and they are expanded and finished in their parts as the course of revelation proceeds." Nor can it be held that this process of expansion and ~~concentration~~ ends with the apostles; for "in the apostolic teaching, no historical point can be found at which the growth of doctrine ceased."<sup>1</sup>

What, then, is dogma? (1) It is the reflective

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mellone's *Leaders of Religious Thought*, pp. 64-67.

## 10 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

formulation of faith. Certainly dogma does not produce faith, but the content of faith is expressed in dogma. And by "faith" must be understood, not merely an emotion, but also an intellectual comprehension of the object to which it is directed. Faith, as we may say, is a passionate belief that Christianity is a true revelation of the nature of God.<sup>(2)</sup> As dogma is merely the intellectual formulation of what is contained in faith, "the formulated dogmas are not essential to the genuineness or perfection of religion or religious belief."<sup>(3)</sup> There is another characteristic of dogma upon which Newman insists: it is not a complete expression of faith, but only a "symbol" or "sign" of it.<sup>(4)</sup> But, while dogma is merely the abstract formulation of faith—while it is, therefore, neither essential to the perfection of faith nor a complete expression of all that is contained in faith—it yet is a means, and indeed an indispensable means, of preserving and perpetuating faith.<sup>(5)</sup> On the other hand, it would be a mistake to contrast faith as perfect with dogma as imperfect; for, just as dogma is an inadequate expression of faith, so faith itself is an imperfect substitute for ultimate truth. A religious idea corresponds to its object as ectype to archetype. Faith holds God to be eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; but all these predicates are but our poor human substitutes for the Divine verities—"metaphors" or "symbols" employed to express the inexpressible, and indeed incomprehensible, approximations to a truth which is for ever beyond our reach.<sup>1</sup>

The bare outline just given of Newman's theory of Development is sufficient to show the originality, and in a certain sense the comprehensiveness, of his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dr. Wilfrid Ward's article on "Newman and Sabatier," in the *Fortnightly Review* for May, 1901.

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

11

thought. Like all the higher minds of the nineteenth century, he instinctively seeks for a principle of reconciliation which shall lift us above such abstract opposites as faith and doctrine, revelation and reason, eternal truth and human fallibility; and the lever which he employs is that distinctive idea of the nineteenth century, the idea of development. How far, then, can it be said that he has given us a solution that we can accept without reservation?

The conception of development which Newman applies in explanation of the relation between the original "deposit of faith," as he calls it, and the process by which it has been gradually transformed, seems to me to be inadequate. What he means by "development" is something analogous to its older biological use, in which it was employed to designate a theory of preformation, according to which the growth of a living being is "simply a process of enlarging and filling out a miniature organism, actual but invisible, because too inconspicuous,"<sup>1</sup> as distinguished from a genuine evolution of new organic forms. Such a view is no more tenable in the realm of ideas than in the sphere of organic nature. The transition from the original intuition to dogma is not a mere expansion of what already exists "in miniature," to use Newman's own phrase; it is the transformation of a principle into a form which is, at least reflectively, more specific and more complex than the germ from which it is developed. This defect in Newman's conception of development would now, as I think, be admitted by his recent followers, who maintain that there is a genuine development in the ideas of the Divine, as recorded in the Bible itself, and in the history of doctrine, as evolved from

<sup>1</sup> Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 424.

## 12 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the apostolic teaching, that teaching being itself a development of the teaching of Jesus. And not only does Newman's contention, that there is no break in the continuity of religious life and thought, anticipate in a way the course of the best recent thought, but his assertion that faith includes an intellectual, as well as an emotional element, is of great importance at the present time, when there is a strong tendency to regard religion as purely subjective, and to deny that it is based upon universal principles which can be justified at the bar of reason. In protesting by anticipation against this view—a view which is at bottom sceptical of all truth—Newman did valuable service in the cause of a rational faith. When religion is emptied of its intellectual element, and reduced to an inarticulate feeling, nothing can save it from final extinction. For, feeling as such—feeling conceived in separation from every object—is a pure fiction, to which no real experience corresponds, and which only seems to exist because it is unwittingly invested with a rational element to which it has no rightful claim. Even Schleiermacher, who tended to eliminate its intellectual constituent, after defining religion as a "feeling of absolute dependence," goes on to identify this "feeling" with "the consciousness of God." In truth, if we eliminate the reference to a Being higher than self, all that is characteristic of religion vanishes away; for a feeling which admits of no further definition has no meaning for human life, and in fact no habitation anywhere but in the confused imagination of the theorist. Religion, as Newman rightly maintains, involves more than mere feeling. If we speak of it as feeling at all, we must add that it is the feeling of a rational being, who recognizes his own finitude in contrast and relation to an Infinite

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY 13

Being. What has led to the supposition that religion is purely a matter of feeling is the familiar experience that it exists, and not infrequently exists in great strength and purity, in those who are unable to analyze their belief, and set forth its constituent elements in reflective form. But the absence of reflection is not the same thing as the undivided sway of feeling. The religious consciousness involves the idea of the Infinite, though that idea may not be made an explicit and separate object of abstract thought; and if that idea were not present as an informing spirit, giving meaning and direction to faith, the feeling of absolute rest in the Eternal, which is one of its marks, would be inexplicable.

Newman is therefore right, as I believe, in maintaining that the religious consciousness contains an intellectual or rational element. And he is also right, I think, in affirming that this consciousness is not created by dogma. More hesitation will be felt in admitting that the genuineness and perfection of religion is entirely independent of formulated dogmas. Since faith precedes and is the condition of dogma, obviously it cannot depend for its existence upon dogma; but it hardly follows that the development of faith into doctrine in no way contributes to the perfection of faith. The formulation by reason of what is implicit in religious intuition is not a work of supererogation; it is an instance of a universal law of the human mind, and plays an important part in the development of the religious consciousness. Only by formulating his faith, and setting its contents clearly before his mind, does man come to understand what it really involves; only thus does he learn to eliminate the accidental and self-contradictory ingredients that weaken its power, and to liberate it from its



## 14 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

sensuous and unspiritual setting. In this way Christianity, at first swathed in the garments of the Jewish ceremonial law, was purified and universalized ; and a similar process has been going on in modern times, by which it has been stripped of the limitations imposed upon it by the application to it of forms of thought borrowed from the later Greek philosophy and by the confinement of its free spirit in the bonds of medieval dualism. Thus the primitive faith, though it contained a principle that, as I believe, can never die—the principle that only in unity with the Infinite can man realize himself—has come to an ever clearer comprehension of its true self. By disengaging the principle which operates in simple faith, it is seen to have a wider and more intimate application, as when, to borrow the imagery of Goethe's fairy-tale, the shepherd's hut has expanded into the temple of humanity by the ever clearer realization of what is meant by love of one's neighbour. It cannot therefore be said that the process of formulating faith has nothing to do with its perfection ; for that process does minister to its perfection by revealing it to itself. We may say of it what Shakespeare says of the eye :

"Nor doth the eye itself,  
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,  
Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed  
Salutes each other with each other's form.  
For speculation turns not to itself,  
Till it hath travelled and is mirrored there,  
Where it may see itself."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt the development of faith comes largely through the influence of men of religious genius, who raise it to a higher potency ; but even here the

<sup>1</sup> *Troilus and Cressida*, act III., scene iii., ll. 107-111.

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY 15

reformulation of faith is an indispensable element in its development. What Newman was mainly thinking of, when he declared that faith is independent of dogma, was no doubt the undeniable fact, that the individual man does not cease to be religious because he does not, and perhaps cannot, express his faith in definite propositions. But, true as this is, it by no means shows that faith is not enriched by the process in which it is brought to a reflective consciousness of its own principle. "No man liveth to himself; no man dieth to himself"; and, though this or that man may live in a faith which he cannot make articulate, it must be remembered that he habitually dwells in an atmosphere of ideas prepared for him by the toil of his fellows, not excluding those who have provided him, without effort on his part, with an instrument of reason in the very words he uses to express what otherwise would be inexpressible.

Newman, however, tells us that after all dogma is not really an expression of faith, but merely a "symbol" of what cannot be expressed. What he seems to mean is, that there is a fulness and concreteness in the immediate religious consciousness which defies all attempts at embodiment in abstract propositions. And no doubt we must admit that it is fatal to identify religion and theology, for such an identification will either destroy the warm and breathing intensity of faith, substituting a creed for a life, or it will convert a system of conceptions into a vague and ill-defined mass of feelings, impulses, and images. Religion and theology have each their own form and their own law, and nothing but confusion can result from fusing together things so disparate in their nature. The perfection of religion consists in complete immersion of the whole man in the Eternal, the perfection of theology in the complete

## 16 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

comprehension of the Eternal by the intellect ; and, although, in the wide sense, religion is the source from which theology must draw its content, it is nevertheless true that a religion which never rises to self-consciousness in a theology will soon have no content from which theology can draw. Nor do I think that theology is merely the symbol of a reality contained only in religion, if this means that religion has a wealth of content which escapes formulation. In the sense already stated, theology cannot comprehend religion without becoming identical with it, and that would mean the destruction of both ; but this is in no way inconsistent with the view, that theology may bring to explicit consciousness the *principle* of which religion is the personal consciousness. The notion that theology is merely symbolic seems to me to rest upon the false assumption that thought operates with mere abstractions, whereas it really works with conceptions, which are ultimately distinctions within a single principle that admits of infinite applications.

So far from taking this view of thought, Newman goes on to maintain that, just as dogma is an inadequate expression of faith, so faith is itself an imperfect substitute for the apprehension of ultimate truth. And here, perhaps, we come clearly in sight of the fundamental assumption which underlies the whole of Newman's reasoning, and indeed of the reasoning of all who ultimately fall back upon authority. If the faith of the individual is veritably life in the Eternal, there is no reason to seek for any *tertium quid* to unite man and God ; for they are, on that supposition, already united. But if faith is after all merely the aspirations of a weak and fallible mortal after an Infinite to which he can never reach, it is necessary to find some external medium by which the finite and infinite may be

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY 17

brought together. That medium Newman finds in the authority of the Church, just as others have found it in a mystical intuition, or in some form of mind different from our ordinary consciousness. In referring the view of Newman to his hidden assumption of the Church as an external authority necessary to help out the weakness of faith, I do not mean that he in any way tampered with the facts as he read them ; but only that, seeing them as he did, no other solution seemed to him open. Newman saw, as every devout mind must see, that it is impossible to comprehend the Infinite in all its fulness and perfection, while we yet must in some sense know the Infinite, or we are for ever shut out from reality and truth. "Who can by searching find out God, who can find out the Almighty unto perfection ?" This difficulty he tried to solve by distinguishing between the "symbols" we employ to express the truth, and the "truth" they are meant to express. Now, there is great plausibility in the idea, that all our conceptions of the Divine are "symbols" of a Reality that we do not grasp in itself ; but, when it is pressed to its logical consequences, it results in the denial of all knowledge of any kind. Let us suppose, with Newman, that our highest ideas of the Divine are merely symbolic. Then, what we call our knowledge of God cannot be the comprehension of God as He is, but must be merely the presentation of a mental construction of our own, which stands to us for God, but is in reality only a convenient fiction, which we assume to be in some way representative of a God whom in any proper sense we do not know. But, if, in thinking of God, we do not really comprehend Him, by what process is He brought within the range of our experience? It is no answer to fall back upon the "imbecility of the human intelligence," for it is the

## 18 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

religious consciousness as a personal experience which is here in question, and if that consciousness does not bring us into the presence of God, we have no other organ by which to apprehend Him. And if Newman is precluded from urging the limitation of the intellect in this case, he cannot take refuge in a mystical intuition, for he does not admit that we possess any higher form of apprehension than that of the ordinary consciousness. Nor, again, can he urge that the religious consciousness is a form of feeling ; for he contends, and, as I think, rightly contends, that faith must have an object to which it is directed, and this object, as he admits, exists only for thought. Now, if God is present neither in pure feeling, nor in pure thought, nor in the unity of the two, how can the human mind possibly come into contact with Him? As Newman rejects the *via negativa* of a mystical union with God, maintaining that a rational faith is the highest form of human experience, we are forced to conclude that there is in his doctrine a fundamental discrepancy which vitiates his main conclusion. If we cannot comprehend the nature of God, it is obvious that we cannot even comprehend that we cannot comprehend Him. A symbol is meaningless except in relation to that which it symbolizes, and if we are unable to reach out beyond the symbol, we can never know that it is a symbol of anything, much less the symbol of an Infinite which by hypothesis is hidden from us by the very constitution of our minds. We cannot, then, as I think, admit that the Divine lies beyond the reach of our consciousness.

But, if we deny Newman's view of the symbolical character of our religious ideas, we are forced to face the problem of how a finite being can comprehend the Infinite. Can we know God without being God?

## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY 19

This is a problem with which every philosophy of religion must grapple on pain of annihilation. I hope to do something in the sequel to solve it. Meantime, it may be pointed out that to claim knowledge of the Infinite is not to claim infinite knowledge. To say that  $3 + 2 = 5$  is certainly not to assume complete knowledge, and yet, if the judgment is true at all, it is true for all intelligences and at all moments, and in that sense is a knowledge of the Infinite. So if I say that "God is one," I express what is true absolutely, if it is true at all, no matter what the character of the "oneness" may be. The judgment means, that whatever else God is, He is *one*. Now, if this is true, we reach a conception which no possible extension of experience can possibly overthrow, though, with the increase of knowledge, it will no doubt receive further definition and interpretation. If God is "one," He may still be "one" in many senses; we may conceivably define His unity as the unity of a Substance, the unity of a Person, or the unity of Spirit; but, whichever of these determinations we may ultimately adopt, our original proposition, that He is one and not many, will remain intact; and, indeed, one test of the truth of different attempts to characterize His nature, will be, whether they are, or are not, consistent with the fundamental characterization of Him as one. No doubt, if we are challenged to prove the oneness of God, we shall have some difficulty in doing so; a difficulty, however, which will not seem insuperable to any one who sees that, by its denial, the whole of our experience is made inexplicable. Starting, then, from the comprehension of God as one, we may proceed to ask what further determinations are essential to the explanation of the facts of our experience. In this way we may, as I think, proceed step by step to define



## 20 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

God, *i.e.* to state the fundamental determinations implied in the reality of the world we know. And if in the end we admit, as we must, that we cannot fully determine God, that will in no way invalidate our claim to know what God in His essential nature truly is. Thus every step in our thought of God may be a real comprehension of what He is, while yet our knowledge of Him is no doubt but poor and barren as compared with the unsearchable riches of His being.

Why, then, does Newman deny our knowledge of God? Why does he set up an impassable barrier between the consciousness of man and the reality of God? Partly at least because, in his view, the human mind is not only incapable of itself of discovering ultimate reality, but even of really comprehending it when it is supernaturally revealed. The Church, as divinely appointed, must guarantee what reason can neither originate nor understand. But this doctrine cuts both ways. If the mind cannot comprehend God even when He is revealed to it, how can He be revealed at all? To say that the Church stands sponsor for the existence and nature of God does not do away with the fundamental difficulty, that man, as a being who is unable to transcend his own limited consciousness, cannot be the recipient of even the certainty that God is, because he cannot form any idea of what this God of whom the Church speaks really is. Nor indeed can he have real knowledge of anything else, and therefore not even of the Church, nor of what the Church means. Nothing, in short, can be revealed to a being who is incapable of grasping reality. You cannot make a dog or a child understand a proposition in Euclid, because the faculty of working with universals is absent in the one and undeveloped in the other; and, similarly, if my so-called knowledge of God is never



## RELIGION AND AUTHORITY

21

really of God, but only of "symbols" that are interposed between my consciousness and reality, anything pretending to be a revelation of God will be to me as incomprehensible as the *pons asinorum* to the dog or the child. The fundamental weakness of this whole mode of thought was clearly brought to light, subsequent to the time of Newman, by Mansel's self-contradictory attempt, in his *Limits of Religious Thought*, to show that the Infinite is a self-contradictory conception, being inconceivable by us because of the imbecility of our intelligence. As Newman urged the feebleness of our minds to attain to union with God, in order to force the admission of the divine authority of the Church, so Mansel, by an argument at bottom identical, sought to establish the authority of Scripture on the basis of the insuperable limitations of the human intellect. The logical result of both doctrines was soon seen in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who drew the inference that the term "God" is but a name for that ultimate Reality, the nature of which is by us unknowable and indefinable. When the idea of God has thus been emptied of all content, it cannot matter very much whether it stands for something or nothing; one thing at least is certain, that it cannot serve as the foundation either of religion or of theology.



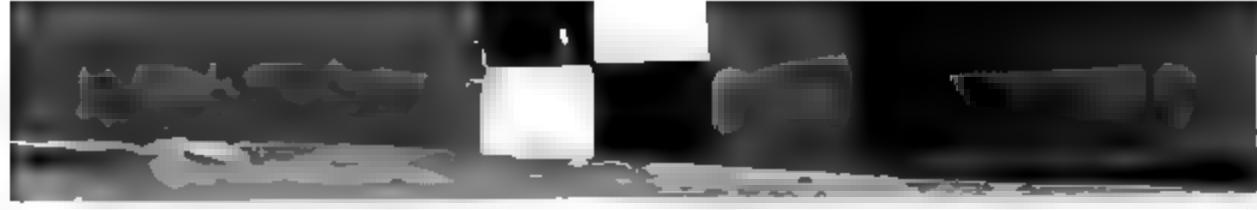
## LECTURE SECOND

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA

AT our last meeting we were occupied in considering the general nature of religion, the different elements which enter into it, and the relation of these elements to one another. Religion we agreed to regard as the consciousness of the divine, and its constituents as the response to the divine of the individual, its comprehension by his intelligence, and the outward expression of this rational emotion in certain acts of ritual. We further discovered that, in the attempt to understand the religious consciousness, different thinkers attach pre-eminent importance to one or other of these constituents, and thus reach widely different conclusions: some forcing the personal aspect into the foreground, while others attach almost exclusive importance to its intellectual or conceptual aspect. To the latter class belong those theologians, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, who hold that the truth of the Christian religion cannot be established by the exercise of private judgment, but requires for its security the authority of a church. A distinguished representative of this mode of thought we found in Cardinal Newman, whose "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine" struck the key-note with which the speculations of

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 23

more recent thinkers are in substantial harmony. That Essay we found to be so far in agreement with the reconciliatory spirit of the nineteenth century as to apply the idea of development in explanation of the permanence in change which has marked the history of religion, but to be defective to this extent, that development is conceived rather as a mere enlargement of features present from the first than as a genuine evolution. Newman, however, as we saw, rightly insists upon the presence in the religious consciousness of an intellectual as well as an emotional element, though he hardly does justice to the value of the explicit formulation of that element as a means of enriching faith by bringing to clear consciousness its permanent essence as distinguished from its evanescent form, and enabling it to gain a mastery over all the manifestations of the human spirit. Conceiving of dogma as merely a symbol of faith, Newman is forced to fall back on the external authority of the Church, a conclusion which seems to be confirmed by his view of faith, as itself but the "symbol" of a truth with which the individual mind, because of the limitations of human thought, never comes in direct contact. This whole mode of conception we ventured to reject, together with the corollary that religion must ultimately rest upon external authority; maintaining that, if pressed to its logical conclusion, it results in absolute scepticism; and in place of it we sought to commend what seemed the self-consistent doctrine, that in virtue of his rational nature man is not only capable of comprehending the Infinite and Eternal, but in truth only requires to bring into clear consciousness what is implied in his experience of the world and of himself to see that, as his true life consists in union with the Divine, so it is the



## 24 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

conception of the Divine which gives meaning to the whole of his experience. With this conclusion we might pass from the theory which appeals to external authority in support of faith, but it seems advisable first to consider what more recent exponents of it have to say in its favour.

It is customary, as we are told by Dr. Wilfrid Ward,<sup>1</sup> for those who attack the principle of Authority to give a false and misleading account of what it means, representing it as a claim upon men to accept certain religious dogmas as true, not because they admit of demonstration, but because they are vouched for by an infallible Church. No intelligent man would advance or submit to so preposterous a demand. What is really contended is that the living Church embodies the intuitions of the great saints, and the reflections of the great theologians, as exercised by them in the consideration and analysis of the Christian revelation. The function of the Church has been to proclaim formally through its official organs the conclusions derived in this way from scripture and tradition. St. Augustine, and not any infallible teacher, formed the theological intellect of Western Christendom, as Cardinal Newman reminds us, just as St. Thomas Aquinas was the master spirit in the age of Dante. It is individual genius within the Church which has for the most part suggested the successive developments of the primitive revelation and its intellectual illustration and setting. It is further contended that, not merely in matters of religious belief, but in the case of all beliefs, Authority plays an important and a necessary part. (1) No one would now press the right of private judgment to the extreme of claiming for it the privilege of holding any opinion,

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, i. 678 ff.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 25

however absurd or immoral. We all recognize the corporate authority of experts in history, physical science, and other departments of knowledge; and we have no hesitation in saying that the mere layman should defer to their authority, devoting his own reasoning powers mainly to the correction and development of the corporate reason. The human race has justly been compared to a living organism, and if there is any force in the analogy there must be not only the same division of labour in the one as in the other, but also growth and development. The long experience of the race, in fact, is to a great extent the ground of the Authority exercised by the educated over the uneducated. (2) Besides the Authority of experts, a peculiar Authority is rightly claimed for those whose perceptions are either absolutely new or at least abnormally clear and distinct. These are the great spiritual pioneers of the race, whose conscience is supremely sensitive to the direct influence of the Divine. Here is a new Authority, whose intimations should be acted upon, tested, and developed. Of this nature is the Authority of Christ, the highest of all Authority because based upon an experience absolutely unique, in which the Unknown God, dimly present in the conscience of prophet and sage, is openly and unambiguously proclaimed. (3) Lastly comes the Authority of the Christian Church, which, resting upon the revelations of conscience and its development by Christ, may fairly be held to embody the highest spiritual perceptions known to man. And not only so, but it is the custodian of the conceptions elaborated by Christian theologians from conscience and revelation. Thus it contains at once the highest intuitions and the most comprehensive conceptions of Christendom, while the blending of spiritual perception and rational



## 26 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

analysis is secured by the rulers who preserve the organic unity of the Church, protect the revelation from rationalistic assaults, and seek to keep theology spiritual as well as rational.

No one can fail to be struck by the moderate and reasonable tone of the modern exponents of Authority, as indicated by the theory of which a hasty summary has just been given. It is of good augury for the future of theology that the older idea of an absolutely fixed and unchanging body of doctrine has come to seem incredible to the more enlightened minds in the Romish Church, just as the view held for so long by Protestant theologians, that "all the books of the Bible contain the same rigid system of ideas with unessential variations," has been modified by recent advances in historical criticism. But, while we cannot but rejoice in the new and more sympathetic attitude of liberal theologians, we must ask whether, having gone so far, they are not in consistency under compulsion to go further. If there is no infallible system of doctrine, can we still retain the conception of an infallible Church? Is it possible to admit that dogma has undergone continual evolution, without granting that the Church has not always stood for the highest truth? And if the Church has in some cases opposed what afterwards she accepted, are we not forced to say that the authority which she has exercised has sometimes been an obstacle to the truth, instead of being the condition of its development? These questions cannot be summarily dismissed, but must be candidly considered, and answered either positively or negatively.

The Church, as it is claimed, has been the custodian of the intuitions of the great saints and the ratiocinations of the great theologians; so that the revelations

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 27

men of religious genius have been the main factor determining the theology which official authority guards. Now, it is of course true that Christianity has developed under the influence of the new experiences and the reflections of men whose ideas have received the official sanction of the Church. But, while this is admitted, it does not follow that there was no truth in the intuitions and reflections of those who have not only failed to receive authoritative recognition, but who have even been condemned as heretics. There are, indeed, thinkers within the Church who are candid enough to admit, what in any case is undeniable, that there have been occasions in which the heretic was right and the official authority wrong; as when Marcion protested against the acceptance of the Old Testament as an absolute standard of Christian morals. It is hardly possible to reconcile such a lapse with the contention that the Church has always guarded the truth, except on the principle that even her mistakes have been advantageous in the long run; a principle which may indeed be defended if we take a sufficiently comprehensive view, but only by a method which would equally establish the rationality of the wildest deviations from truth and the most atrocious crimes. Without entering into this subtle and difficult problem, I think we may fairly say, with a recent defender of the Romish Church, that by the condemnation of Marcion, the difficulty, which he sought to have solved, was "thereafter thrust into the background under the aegis of Church authority, only to become more prominent than ever when . . . Luther used the Old Testament to defend the polygamy of a Christian King and the Puritans to defend the murder of enemies whom the Lord had delivered into their hands."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, ii. 218.



## 28 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

In the condemnation of Marcion, then, we have an instance in which the authority of the Church was admittedly exercised in withholding the truth. Is it not evident from such a fact alone, that the progress of truth cannot be confined within any prescribed limits? Beyond the sphere of ideas which official authority guards, lies a wider realm of truth, which it ignores or condemns, and this fact is in no way invalidated by the consideration that the Church has been enriched by the intuitions and the reasonings of her favoured sons. It is not denied that on the whole the Church for many centuries preserved truth which would otherwise have been lost to the world; but this cannot be taken to mean that it never resisted the progress of truth, and certainly it does not entitle us to assert that, in these days when many organs, all working together and contributing towards the good of the whole, are essential to perfection, all truth is shut up within a single branch of the Christian Church, or even within all its branches in their totality.

While the development of theology, as it is held, has been determined mainly by the intuitions and reflections of men of original genius, the Church is claimed to have exercised a controlling and selective influence, guarding the truth from the aberrations of an unsanctified reason. Obviously, therefore, a certain critical process, involving the exercise of reason, falls to be discharged by the Church. Its various councils weighed and adjudicated upon competing doctrines, determining how far the ideas suggested by men of genius were compatible with the essence of Christianity. And it must be admitted that, on the whole, the Church has shown a true instinct in refusing to endorse one-sided views of the divine nature. In this way it discharged an inestimable service in its earlier history,

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 29

rejecting dualistic views, which involved the absolute opposition of divine and human ; refusing to break with the past by discarding the Old Testament scriptures, which contain the records of a religious experience, of which Christianity is not the abrogation but the fulfilment ; absorbing Greek Philosophy and employing its categories in the construction of a Theology ; and, in our own day, using the discoveries of science and the fuller comprehension of philosophy to deepen and expand its conception of God, the world, and man. But, in all this process, we must discern the operation of that higher reason, which in other forms gives meaning to the intuitions of men of religious genius, informs the speculations of philosophy, and determines the discoveries of science. What gives force to the decisions of the Church is the reason immanent in it. Its authority springs from no external transmission of power, nor does it possess any special means of insight not open to the universal spirit of humanity ; and its decrees have precisely that degree of value and no more than is imparted to them by their harmony with the truth. That the Church has in general stood for the truth, and has been the indispensable instrument in the preservation of a spiritual view of life, is but an instance of that fundamental reasonableness which lies deep in human nature. Nor can she claim to have been invariably free from aberration and error, for which humanity has had to suffer, and in some cases to suffer terribly. The Church, in short, like all human institutions, is neither infallible nor devoid of reason : she has undoubtedly been a witness for the truth, but it is an utterly untenable position that no truth has been developed beyond her pale.

What, then, is the ultimate court of appeal ? There is no ultimate court of appeal but reason, as interpreting



## 30 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the growing experience of the race. Anything short of this must be more or less a distortion of the true nature of things. And reason can only do its perfect work, if it is left free and untrammeled. This does not mean that there are no eternal principles of truth and righteousness. The notion that the denial of all authority but reason is equivalent to the assertion that everyone has a right to raise his private judgment and his conscience to the rank of an absolute authority, irresponsible to any other tribunal, is a mere travesty of the so-called "right of private judgment." There is no right divine to reason wrong, any more than to govern wrong. Nothing absolves a man from the obligation to accept nothing but the truth. The justification of the right, or rather the duty, of private judgment is that, as truth is not revealed to man once for all, but is slowly evolved by immense patience and toil, any foreclosing of the pathway to truth—any assumption of an ultimate and intranscendible limit—puts an arbitrary stop to that free movement of the spirit, without which a new and deeper insight into reality is impossible. As Cardinal Newman pointed out, the theology of a given age is the expression of the stage of truth at which man has so far arrived, but it is not to be identified with absolute truth, truth in its full-orbed completeness. Nevertheless, as I believe, the truth of any age contains absolute truth within it, as the germ contains the developed organism; for, at no time, not even in his primitive half-blind imaginings, is man entirely destitute of the consciousness of the divine, just as in his latest stage he cannot hope to find the universe absolutely transparent to his spiritual vision.

The element of truth, then, in the contention that theology rests upon the authority of the Church, seems

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 31

to me to be this, that the Church has on the whole endorsed that higher view of life which is the most precious possession of the race, a view which has been mainly determined by the insight of its saints and thinkers; *i.e.* by reason as interpreting the deepest experiences of the heart and coming to the consciousness of itself in the comprehension of a rational universe. What is called the authority of the Church is really the authority of reason or truth, and where the Church has been misled, or has been contented with a half-truth, to that extent it has no authority whatever. Let us, however, consider the special reasons which are usually put forward in support of the contention that the authority of the Church is in all cases absolute and unquestionable.

An argument is based, for one thing, on the analogy of science and religion. As the layman must acknowledge the authority of the expert in history, physical science, and other departments of thought, devoting his own reasoning powers to the correction and development of the corporate reason; so, it is said, the individual ought to submit to the authority of the Church, reserving his independent activity for the enrichment of the truth announced by the Church. And of course no one is likely to deny that we shall all show our wisdom by deferring to the conclusions reached by those whose lives are devoted to the solution of a special problem. But we must not lightly assume that an acceptance of the conclusions reached by a body of experts is identical in principle with submission to an external authority. Why do we hesitate to dispute the statements of scientific men, especially if there is substantial agreement among them? We do so, or should do so, because we have good grounds for believing that they have gone through



## 32 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

a process, and reached a result, which is identical with the process and result that we should ourselves have experienced had it been possible for us to devote ourselves with equal energy and ability to the same problem. Our assent, in fact, rests upon the tacit conviction that the human mind is in all men of the same fundamental texture, and that, however men may differ in the degree of their intelligence, all will ultimately draw the same conclusions from the same premises. Such a conviction is justifiable only on the supposition that the world in which we live is a rational world, and that in our own intelligence is to be found the principle by which it may be comprehended. Were the universe fundamentally irrational, or were our intelligence incapable of comprehending it—and either supposition leads to the other—there would be no basis for our faith in the conclusions of science, and therefore no reason for ascribing to experts any more "authority" than to others. In a company of the blind, it has been said, even the one-eyed man is king. But where all are equally blind there is no king. The so-called "authority" of the expert, then, is really conceived by us to flow from his greater power of rational insight. Whenever we have reason to believe that he is swayed by prejudice or passion, we lose faith in his judgment, and he ceases to have "authority" over us. Nor can it be admitted without reserve that it is our duty to devote ourselves solely to the correction and development of the corporate reason. No doubt even genius of the highest order does not entitle its possessor to set aside the long toil of ages, as if it had borne no fruit; but, true as this is, it in no way justifies blind submission to current ideas as if they were ultimate. What is the function of genius but to draw aside the veil of tradition which half-conceals and half-



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 33

reveals the fair form of Truth? Whether a man is to occupy himself with the application of ideas already established, or to transmute the whole mass of ideas characteristic of his age into a higher truth, must depend upon his rank in the scale of intelligence. From whatever point of view we look at it, we thus find that no one is called upon to submit to any authority but the authority of reason itself, a reason which is immanent in all men, and of which therefore no man or body of men can claim to be the privileged possessors. The scientific expert who should claim superhuman powers of insight would only draw down upon himself a well-merited suspicion of intellectual arrogance or charlatanry. His real strength lies in his appeal to the universal intelligence. If, therefore, the analogy suggested by the relation of the plain man to the scientific expert is to be valid, the authority claimed for the Church must be placed in its superior rationality. The man of religious genius, like the man of scientific, artistic, or philosophical genius, is endowed with a free and penetrative vision which lifts him above the confused and perplexed consciousness of the ordinary man; but he is no dweller in a strange universe to which others are denied access; what he sees, those of duller perception can be brought to see under his guidance and inspiration. Just as the poet or painter, by stripping off the accidents which hide it from us, directs our attention to a beauty which we too may come to see, so the man of religious genius, dwelling habitually in the Eternal, of which we catch only fitful glimpses, enables us in some measure to see with his purer and clearer eyes. The real analogy would therefore seem to be between the scientific expert and the man of religious genius, while the plain man will be related to the former very much as the Church

## 34 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

is held to be related to the latter. And just as the ordinary man can have no valid ground either for accepting or for rejecting the results of science but their harmony or their disharmony with reason, so the Church which endorses or disapproves of the intuitions of the religious genius can have no defensible ground for its deliverances other than their agreement with reason and truth.

And obviously the comparison of the human race to an organism in no way invalidates this conclusion. It is perfectly true that there is, and must be, a division of labour. We cannot all be experts, any more than there can be a human organism which is all brain ; but it is just as true that the same life must permeate and vitalize every one of the organs, or there will be, not a single organic unity, but a mere assemblage of heterogeneous parts. The analogy will therefore lead us to maintain, that, diverse as are the functions of the layman and the expert in the social organism, it is the same universal reason which is present in both ; the only difference being, that in the former it is developed, while in the latter it is to a large extent only implicit. And similarly, when it is argued that, as organic, the human race grows in experience, and that "the long experience of the race is to a great extent the basis of the authority of the educated over the uneducated," we gladly assent ; only adding, that the "authority" thus resulting is due to the gradual development in the race of that rationality which constitutes in its self-conscious form the distinctive characteristic of man among all the beings known to us. We have "experience" at all, only because through the whole history of our race the same identical principle has been at work, embodying itself in language, customs, laws, and institutions, and in the

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 35

creation of knowledge, art, and religion ; and wherever we discover the inadequacy of the conceptions by means of which order and system have been, partially introduced into human life, the impulse to accept nothing that is not perfectly rational compels us to seek for more adequate conceptions. The exponents of "authority" may paint in the most vivid colours the danger of spiritual shipwreck from the disintegrating power of unchecked reason, but the process of transmutation goes on. As Dante tells us :

" Well I perceive that never sated is  
Our intellect unless the Truth illumine it,  
Beyond which nothing true expands itself.

Therefore springs up, in fashion of a shoot,  
Doubt at the foot of truth ; and this is nature  
Which to the top from height to height impels us."<sup>1</sup>

The principle that only the Truth can permanently satisfy a rational being is especially apparent in the sphere of religion. Men of religious genius, we are told, are endowed with a super-sensitive "conscience," which reveals to them in an intuitive or direct way the reality of God. Without stopping to enquire whether "conscience" is the only guarantee of the divine, we may admit that at least a complete idea of God is impossible without the aid of the moral consciousness. And it is true that there are men whose spiritual insight is so swift and sure that it seems like a gift of nature. They do not slowly and laboriously move from point to point, making their footing secure as they advance, but seem rather to rise by a bound into the empyrean, and to dwell permanently in an atmosphere so rare that others can only breathe it in their best moments. But, while only the finer spirits of our race habitually live

<sup>1</sup> *Divina Commedia, Paradiso, 123-132* (Longfellow's translation).

## 36 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

consciously in the Eternal, all men are capable of the same experience, and without it they would not be the self-conscious and rational beings that they are. Men of religious genius, therefore, but express in a vivid and convincing way what others only discern when the leaden weight of custom is lifted, and for a moment they "see things clear as Gods do." The "authority" of the man of genius flows purely from his higher insight, and is recognized by others in whom it is repeated in a less intense form. The ordinary man is not a blind follower of the religious pioneer ; or, at least so far as he is so, he does not participate in the spirit of religion. The truth of Christianity cannot be established by an appeal to any authority other than the response of man's spirit, and if it is not in its essence a revelation of the very nature of the Infinite, all attempts to perpetuate it must end in failure. So far, therefore, as the Church embodies this revelation in her teaching, she may confidently count on the response of the rational spirit of man to it ; but that response would be not less certain were the Church to discard it and teach the exact opposite. No authority can make falsehood truth or evil good. That which contradicts the eternal nature of things cannot be made true, that which is in opposition to morality cannot be made obligatory, even by the fiat of omnipotence, much less by the imprimatur of a fallible organization. There is, therefore, nothing in the so-called "authority" of the religious reformer to sanction the inference that the Church, or any other body of men, is the sole guide and guardian of the spiritual interests of humanity. The individual may indeed enter into the heritage won for him by the choice religious spirits of the race, but only because in himself he can verify the truth which they have first brought to clear consciousness. The

whole world may join together in a conspiracy to call truth falsehood, and evil good, and the individual may yet withstand its "authority," conscious that in himself he has a witness that cannot be silenced. But, in truth, except in the mouth of the rhetorician, there never has been a case of "Athanasius against the world." The new principle advocated by the religious reformer is never an absolute negation of the old, but rather the old freed from its obscurity and limitations, and become clearly conscious of itself. Christianity effected a revolution in the whole conception of the world, but, as its Founder Himself has told us, it is not the destruction of what it superseded, but its fulfilment; it did not break up the spiritual organism in which man had dwelt for centuries, but merely poured into it new streams of life and energy.

From what has been said, the true view of the authority of the Church may be readily inferred. In the technical sense "The Church" has come to mean a particular organization which claims to be based upon the acceptance of the Christian revelation. This organization, as is held by the exponents of "authority," blends the perceptions of men of religious genius with the reflections of theologians, and "protects the revelation from rationalistic assaults." Now, as we have already seen, it is undoubtedly true that on the whole the Church has been the consistent guardian of the higher interests of man. It is also true that for the discharge of this function an external organization, and during the tutelage of humanity even an authoritative body of doctrine, was a necessity. But these facts by no means entitle us to say that the intuitions and doctrines safeguarded by the Church derive their authority from the Church. They are, as I have contended, authoritative because they are true, not



## 38 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

true because they are authoritative. And when the claim to unique and absolute authority is made, not merely for the Church as a whole—including all its branches, Greek, Roman, and Protestant—but for a single branch of it, we can only answer that it is not given to any body of men to possess a monopoly of truth. This is partly admitted by a Romish writer whom I have already quoted, who, in a remarkable essay, protests against "the idea long held in the Catholic world, and still held by some, that Protestantism and all heathen religions are the work of the devil"; adding, that "the good work of Protestantism is self-evident, and all positive religious conceptions, not only of Protestantism but of Heathenism, have a relative value." No doubt the writer implies that "the good work" of his own Church is not "relative" but "absolute"; but it is hardly necessary to say that this is but an amiable preconception, and that the legitimate conclusion from his admissions is that the whole truth can only be obtained by taking into account the elements contributed by all sections of the Christian Church. But, having gone so far, we are logically compelled to go farther. If the "authority" of the Church universal lies solely and entirely in the truth which it contains, we must be prepared to admit that the ideal Church has a far wider sweep than the whole visible Church of our day, or even the whole visible Church in the completeness of its historical evolution. Whatever makes for the higher life, whether it is sheltered by the visible Church or not, has the self-evidencing authority of Truth. Moreover, the true Church is the Church as in idea it is, the Church in the plenitude of its spiritual power, or as it will be "when the years have passed away"; in other words, it is the divine



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 39

spirit immanent in humanity and progressively working itself out to completion. In this sense of the term, the Church is the vicegerent of God, but only because it is the conscious realization of God in the soul of man. It is therefore a mistake to think of the Church as externally controlling the free movement of humanity, and prescribing fixed limits within which the mind of man must move. There are no limits but those which the divine spirit working in man imposes upon itself. No man, and no body of men, is wise enough to tell in advance by what strange and apparently devious paths reason will work out its own salvation. Such movements as Gnosticism and Neoplatonism in the early centuries of the Christian era, Dualism and Mysticism in the middle ages, and Agnosticism in our own day, are really indispensable steps in the process by which the mind of man rises to a comprehension of the world, the self, and God.

✓ It would not be difficult to show that these and other movements, antagonistic to truth as they apparently are, have really contributed to its fuller comprehension. As Emerson says :

One accent of the Holy Ghost  
A careless world hath never lost.

If it is asked how such a view can be reconciled with the fact that, but for the protecting care of the Church, the Christian religion must long ago have succumbed to the assaults of rationalism, my answer is, that not even the protection of the Church would have saved Christianity from destruction had it not been based on the Truth, and that, if it does rest upon this eternal foundation, we may apply to it in a much truer than its original sense, the great word of Stoicism :

Si fractus illabatur orbis  
impavidum ferient ruinae :

## 40 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

it will retain its serenity in the shock and ruin of a world.

If we follow out the implications of the theory of development on the basis of authority, as held by Newman and his recent followers, it is obvious that it provides a way of escape from the older view of the literal accuracy of the sacred writings. These are held to be but the records of early religious experience or belief, and though there is "a deposit of faith," as Newman calls it, the form in which Christianity originally appeared belongs to the transient element, while its essence is eternal, and receives continuous definition in the development of Christian faith and doctrine. Obviously, anyone who adopts this attitude will have no difficulty in accepting the most drastic results of modern biblical criticism, confident at once in the absolute truth of the primitive revelation and in the certainty with which it is preserved from pollution by the fostering care of an infallible Church. By no writer of our day has this doctrine been more boldly and persuasively advocated than by Abbé Loisy in his *L'Evangile et l'Eglise*.

Religion, our author tells us, is subject to the universal law of all things—the law of growth, development, change. The Monotheism of the Old Testament, while it is in essence identical with that of the New, differs in being less developed. And, just as the Jahveh of the old canticles and legends differs very widely from the God of Justice revealed by the Prophets, so the formulas of our day are not in all points identical with those of St. Paul or St. Augustine. As a matter of fact, Jesus announced the immediate approach of "The Kingdom of Heaven," which must not be conceived merely as a state of holiness or union with God, but as a

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 41

joyous and happy life on earth, in which the physical and moral nature of man should be developed to the full. In this apocalyptic sense it was understood by His immediate followers. Now, men who are looking forward to an awful and universal catastrophe, to come upon the world in their own day, cannot stop to lay down rules for the guidance of the ages which in their belief will never follow. Hence, to attribute to Jesus a deliberate system of social organization is as false historically as it would be to assign to Solomon the authorship of the Proverbs. The truth is, that the New Testament, like the Old, is permeated by a conception of the universe and of history which has little in common with ours. And this is true not only of the teachings which fall within the intellectual sphere, but of those which pertain to the religious domain as well. Our notion of God and His goodness, our view of the Atonement, and in general the whole body of doctrine dealing with Christology, Man, and the Church, are not truths dropped from heaven and hoarded up by religious tradition in the exact form in which they first appeared. No limit can be set to the process by which the traditional formulas are subjected to a never-ending interpretation, in which the letter which killeth is regulated by the spirit that giveth life. Nor is rigid unchangeability at all essential to the authority of belief, or compatible with the nature of the human intellect. For no everlasting edifice can be built up with the elements of human thought. Truth is changeless, but not its image as reflected in the uneven mirror of our minds. Often the formation and growth of dogma has been ruled by the most halting logic, as when the Fathers and theologians of the Church sought to prove the

## 42 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

doctrine of the Trinity by an untenable interpretation of the words of Genesis: "Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness." But, to the historian who looks upon the reasons assigned in support of a belief as a sign of its vitality, rather than as the veritable ground of its origin, such a self-mockery of logic is irrelevant. In the domain of things religious and moral, the striving towards the better outruns the arguments adduced in favour of it. What alone is important is that living faith which mocks at the logic employed in its defence, and turns towards the unchangeable Truth athwart the inadequate and therefore perpetually changing formulas in which it is sought to be confined.<sup>1</sup>

In this remarkable correction and application of Newman's theory of development, we can see the doctrine of authority in process of accomplishing its own euthanasia. It is true that the contrast is still retained between the Truth as it is for us, and Truth as it is in itself; between the unchangeability of the original revelation and the varying forms in which it is intellectually formulated from age to age; but, apart from this saving reservation, there is nothing to distinguish the position of Abbé Loisy from that of the most pronounced advocate of a rational Christianity. Development is for him a real evolution, and not, as with Newman, the mere enlargement of a primitive germ; though, no doubt, he conceives of it as in no way affecting the essence or validity of the original revelation. On the other hand, he expresses the strongest objection to the view of such writers as Harnack and Sabatier, who seek to reduce religion to its simplest elements by

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the article on "The Abbé Loisy and the Catholic Reform Movement" in the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1903, signed "Voces Catholicae."

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 43

maintaining that the whole history of dogma, however necessary it may be to the practical triumph of Christianity over opposing forces, is a perversion of its original simplicity. Such a view, discarding as it does the regulative function of the Church, and conceiving of religion purely as a condition of the individual soul, Abbé Loisy could not possibly accept. The "primitive Christianity" of these writers is, in his view, a fiction of their own creation, invented as a support for their subjective view of religion, but in palpable contradiction to the Christianity of Jesus and His immediate followers. A candid examination of the records proves beyond doubt, as he contends, that the Founder of Christianity, though He did not put forward a system of doctrine, had perfectly definite beliefs, not merely in regard to the Fatherhood of God, but in regard to men's duty, in prospect of the approaching end of the world, and to many other things besides ; and it is the primary task of the historian to set forth the ideas of the Saviour as they were manifested in words and deeds, not to recast them in view of a modern theory of religion. Starting with the facts as we find them in the New Testament, it cannot be doubted, as he contends, that the whole process by which Christian doctrine has been developed is essential to the life and energy of the Christian religion. Step by step that religion has shown its power of incorporating all the elements of truth contained in ancient philosophy and modern science, and of informing them with its own spirit.

The contention of Abbé Loisy, that the history of dogma is essential to the unfolding of all that is contained in the original principle of Christianity, must be regarded as an important truth to which the views of Harnack and Sabatier fail to do justice; though Abbé Loisy, on his part, can hardly be said

## 44 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

to distinguish sufficiently between the "wingèd words" in which the Master expresses the very soul of all religion, and those sayings which are obviously of only temporary interest; and, as is only natural in a son of the Church, he fails to allow due weight to that aspect of religion to which Harnack and Sabatier, with a kind of exaggerated Protestantism, tend to attach exclusive value.<sup>1</sup> In a complete view of religion, as I have already suggested, the personal and the universal aspects must each receive due weight; for, if it is true that a religion which is not founded upon truth is a contradiction in terms, it is not the less true, and for the individual man of much greater importance, that it is also a life. The truth, however, seems to me to be that the exaggerated emphasis placed by Abbé Loisy on doctrine, results in the end in the same defect as that of which he accuses his opponents. For, though Harnack seeks to reduce Christianity to a simple faith in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, while his critic insists that it was from the first a complex body of truth, if not of doctrine; the former removes the rational basis of faith by denying that it admits of intellectual comprehension, while the latter, though he affirms that it can be grasped by the intelligence, denies that the forms of intelligence are competent to comprehend Truth as it is in itself. Thus both thinkers in the end agree in holding that faith is something inexplicable, or at least something so simple as to be beyond the reach of clear definition. Nor is the reason for this meeting of extremes far to seek. Like other Ritschlians, Harnack denies that the Infinite is comprehensible in itself, and therefore he is forced to deny the absolute value of all reflection upon the content of religion, and to fall back upon an

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's view is discussed more fully in Lecture Seventh.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA 45

immediate faith in God and goodness as the be-all and end-all of religion ; while Abbé Loisy, like Newman, refuses to admit that man by the exercise of his reason can rise to the knowledge of God, and, therefore, falling back upon the authority of the Church to guarantee what is beyond the reach of reason, he is ultimately driven to the conception of faith as a belief in that which is for reason incomprehensible. There is no escape, as I believe, from the opposite inadequacies of these two exponents of the inconceivable but the clear recognition, that the only valid defence of the Christian religion must consist in showing that, while its history is not a merely superficial process which leaves its primitive germ untouched, but a genuine development, in which a living faith has come to ever clearer self-consciousness, its principle is indestructible, because it is the only rational interpretation of the facts of our experience in their totality. A great writer has said that "in the religious consciousness all nations realize that they possess the truth ; and they have therefore always found in their religion the secret of true dignity and peace. . . . In this pure aether man beholds his own existence in a transfigured reflection, in which all the harsh lights and colours and shadows of the everyday world are softened into eternal peace under the beams of a spiritual sun."<sup>1</sup> Such a peace, as I believe, can be found neither by falling back upon a simple nucleus of faith, which does little to satisfy the obstinate questionings of the intellect, nor in the elusive attempt to find rest in an external authority, but only by the exhaustion of scepticism and pessimism.

<sup>1</sup> Hegel's *Geschichte der Religion*, i. 5.

## LECTURE THIRD

### SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION

IN my last lecture I finished the consideration of the principle of authority, as the supposed basis of doctrine. Recent writers, as we saw, follow the lead of Newman in endeavouring to reconcile the claims of an infallible Church with the changes through which its creed has undoubtedly passed ; maintaining that the function of authority is, not to originate or even to develop religious truths, but to select, among the new ideas advanced by men of religious genius, those which are in accordance with the original revelation. Admitting that there has been a real evolution of doctrine, and in this respect occupying a more tenable position than Newman, these thinkers employ the idea of the organic unity of man in support of their view of authority ; arguing (1) that no one can claim the right to set up his individual opinion against the collective experience of the race in the region of science and history ; (2) that the intuitions and reflections of men of religious genius carry with them a peculiar authority ; and (3) that the Church combines the perceptions of its saints with the conceptions of its theologians, and protects the truth from rationalistic assaults. While admitting

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 47

that the Church has done an invaluable service in the past, it was pointed out that it has also at times retarded progress, and therefore cannot be fairly claimed as the only custodian of truth. No doubt it has on the whole resisted one-sided views; but the real explanation of this fact is, that, like all the institutions in which man expresses himself, the Church is an embodiment, though not a perfect embodiment, of reason, and only in so far as this is the case has it any authority. Nor does the assimilation of mankind to an organism lend any countenance to the doctrine of authority; the analogy rather confirms the view, that, just as we accept the conclusions of the scientific expert because we believe them to have a rational foundation, and endorse the higher intuitions of the religious genius because they appeal to our own awakened consciousness; so the only claim of the Church to our allegiance is the degree in which it stands for the truth. It follows that no Church can justly claim to be the only guardian of the spiritual interests of humanity; and, in fact, that the ideal Church cannot be confined within any given organization, but operates through all the channels by which the divine spirit immanent in man diffuses itself. This is almost explicitly recognized by Abbé Loisy, who has no difficulty in accepting the results of recent science, including its application to the historical criticism of the sacred writings; maintaining that, while truth is changeless, human beliefs undergo continual metamorphosis. In thus insisting upon the development of doctrine as essential to the comprehension of the principle of Christianity, Abbé Loisy accentuates an important aspect of truth; but he fails to allow proper weight to that aspect of truth to which thinkers like Harnack and Sabatier attach

## 48 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

almost exaggerated importance, namely, the response of the individual soul. A complete view of religion involves the due recognition of both aspects; maintaining that, as reason informs the religious life of the individual, so it is capable of being embodied in an articulated system.

The conclusion to which we have been led obviously compels us, while doing justice to the long experience of the race, to discard all appeals to external authority, and to claim assent for nothing that cannot be shown to be a valid interpretation of that experience. Now, it cannot be denied that the burden thus thrust upon us is a heavy one; so heavy, indeed, that many thinkers of repute tell us that it is beyond the limited strength of man to bear. "Never before," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "has there been such a crisis in the history of belief. Never before has man, enlightened as he now is by science, faced with a free mind the problem of his origin and destiny." Nor does the writer think that any aid can come from philosophy. "A metaphysical book, it seems, has reached its eighth edition. This shows that a number of inquirers are still upon that track. Is there any hope in that direction? Is it possible that mental introspection should lead us to objective truth? Might we not as well look for scientific fact in the structure of a scientific instrument, as for objective truth in the structure of the mind? Intellects of the highest order have been devoted to metaphysic; and with what result? From the Greek philosophers to the schoolmen, from the schoolmen to the Germans, system succeeds system, without progress or practical outcome. Even the reputed discoveries of Berkeley have borne no practical fruit, and Hegel is already as dead as Pythagoras. Meantime, genuine science

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 49

wins a series of practical triumphs and is advanced even by practical errors. The datum assumed by metaphysic throughout is that reality must correspond to conception. No such assumption is involved in our belief in moral responsibility, or other spiritual phenomena of human nature, which are facts of mental experience and observation, though not of bodily sense."<sup>1</sup>

We have here the forcible expression of a view that is current in some form or other among many representatives of literature, art, and science; a view which, as I hope to show, is at bottom superficial and self-contradictory. Its significance lies mainly in the fact that, with the collapse of traditional ideas, the whole edifice of religion, within which for centuries men have dwelt secure, seems to have crashed down, and they can only sit sadly among the ruins, vainly trying to comfort themselves with the belief that at least morality is safe. I say "vainly," for once persuade men that "objective truth" is beyond their reach, and it will not be long before they draw the only logical inference, that even "moral responsibility" is a fiction. Had the distinguished writer from whom I have quoted clearly seen the consequences of his rejection of all aid from philosophy—which, after all, is but reflection made systematic and comprehensive—perhaps he would have hesitated to condemn it so unreservedly. Of this, however, I am not sure, for his condemnation seems to be based upon the false opposition of introspection and observation—an opposition which no metaphysician would now admit to be valid, any more than he would accept the view of George Henry Lewes, which the writer endorses, that the history of philosophy is but a record of the

<sup>1</sup> Goldwin Smith, *In Quest of Light*, p. 46.

## 50 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

abortive efforts of men of the first rank to solve an insoluble problem—a view which, among other defects, involves the incredible hypothesis that rational beings have persistently wasted their strength on an intrinsically irrational task. That a writer who has made for himself a name as a historian and publicist should labour under such extraordinary misconceptions is a sufficient justification, if any were needed, of the attempt to show that the reconstruction of religious belief on the basis of reason is not an insoluble problem. As the first step towards the solution of that problem, I shall begin with a short statement and criticism of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who, more than any other thinker, has determined the course of speculation for over a century. This was largely due to the courage with which he faced the apparently irreconcilable claims of the head and the heart, doing full justice to the inviolability of natural law, and yet refusing to surrender that inextinguishable belief in a spiritual world which has survived the heaviest onslaughts.

From the sixteenth century till the age of Kant, there had been very marked progress in the region of physical science as well as in the wider movements of philosophy and theology. The progress in science had consisted in the ever clearer apprehension of the reign of law, as exhibited in instance after instance, and the consequent denial of all breaks in the continuity of natural processes, by the intrusion into the realm of nature of any supernatural agency. The growth of this conviction, the conviction of the inviolability of natural law, raised a peculiar difficulty when men came to consider its bearing upon their own life. If all other things are under the dominion of natural law, is it not an arbitrary proceeding, showing prejudice rather

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 51

than clear thought, to exempt man from the sway of law as if he were a sort of *Iusus naturae*? The difficulty had been increased by the change in the general point of view produced by the Copernican astronomy, the revival of learning, and the discovery of the new world. The Ptolemaic cosmogony had for centuries ruled the minds of men, for reasons that are not difficult to understand. It could apparently appeal to the testimony of facts : it agreed with the biblical cosmology: it cohered with the tendency of thought in all ages to conceive of the Divine as raised above the world, with its perpetual process of birth and death, its struggle between evil and good, its strange admixture of beauty and ugliness. We must also remember that, while the mind of man is ever seeking for complete unity, and therefore can never be satisfied with anything short of a perfect reconciliation of his higher beliefs with his scientific knowledge, there is at certain periods, and in certain persons, a tendency to place exaggerated emphasis on one or other of these aspects. Now, the long struggle of the middle ages was a period when the barbarism of the Teutonic, and the worldliness of the Latin, races had to be modified by the higher impulse of religious faith ; and it was only natural that an antagonism, which still survives in a modified way—the antagonism between the secular and the sacred—should then assume an acute form, and that whatever seemed to be inconsistent with the letter of religion should be branded as impious. Nevertheless, reason was not entirely without a witness. The scholastic philosophy, though it was primarily employed in the service of an authoritative creed, unconsciously prepared the way for the new cosmogony of Copernicus. The human mind cannot be long employed even upon dogmas, the truth of which it does not venture to doubt,

## 52 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

without finding itself confronted with difficulties which it is unable to solve. By accustoming the mind to see the objections which might be raised to what at first sight seemed beyond doubt, Scholasticism prepared the way for the rejection of that sensuous view of the cosmos on which ancient and mediaeval astronomy was based. And men's minds were more ready to accept the new cosmogony, because such thinkers as Nicolaus Cusanus and Bernardino Telesio had already suggested doubts of the traditional view on general philosophical grounds. The former argued that "the world can have neither centre nor circumference, for it could only have these in relation to something external, by which it is limited, and would thus not be the whole world." The cosmos has, therefore, no definite figure. "Every point in the world may, with equal right, be called the centre, or be set in the periphery. And since the earth does not stand at the absolute centre of the world, it cannot be at rest."<sup>1</sup> Cusanus thus denied on general grounds that the earth is the central point of the world, though he did not teach that the earth moved round the sun. In doing so he had dealt a severe blow to the mediaeval cosmogony ; for, not only was the world set spinning in space, but the sharp contrast between the heavens and the earth was obliterated. Bernardino Telesio, again, was the representative of a philosophy that made a direct appeal to experience. His main contention was, that there are two forces at work in nature, which manifest themselves in two different modes of motion. "These two principles work on matter, which is never increased or decreased, but which under their influence assumes the most widely different forms, and which is everywhere uniform. There is, therefore, no need to assume a distinction

<sup>1</sup> Höffding's *History of Modern Philosophy*, i. 90.

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 53

between heavenly and terrestrial matter."<sup>1</sup> By the labours of these two thinkers the traditional conception of the world was shaken ; but it was only by the promulgation of the new cosmogony of Copernicus that it fell into complete ruin. The earth was now seen to have no claim to be at the centre of the universe ; the exceptional character of the heavenly bodies had disappeared ; an infinite horizon was disclosed ; and henceforth the limited universe of mediaeval thought had vanished away for ever. The modern mind, pondering over these things, was forced to ask how this new view of the universe affects the old faith. If our earth is an infinitesimal speck in the universe, can we any longer attribute to man that perfection which the Hebrew psalmist expressed by saying that he "is made a little lower than God"? If, so far as experience can tell us, all finite beings, from the lowest to the highest, are continually losing their individuality and giving place to new individuals—a law which applies to man as well as to other beings—and if there is no reason for supposing that, granting the existence of other conscious beings, in other parts of the universe, they are exempt from the same principle of decay—since so far as we know all bodies in space have the same fundamental constitution—must we not conclude that the immortality of man is a fairy dream, natural in the infancy of society, but now incredible? Nay, is there any longer reason to suppose that the existence of God will withstand the shock of modern mechanical explanations? When Laplace said that the idea of God was a "hypothesis" for which he had no need, did he not express the only logical result of the new cosmogony? Thus it would seem that if the new conception of the universe has vastly enlarged our

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* i. 94.



## 54 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

ideas—if it has, in Mr. Balfour's phrase, "glutted our imaginations with material infinities"—it has at the same time given a tremendous shock to those beliefs which we are so unwilling as men to surrender.

Now, Kant accepted the new cosmogony in its entirety, and even made a further contribution to it by propounding the nebular hypothesis; and yet he believed that he had discovered a way by which the higher interests of man may be conserved. He first asks whether the method and the principles of the physical sciences, the validity of which, at least within their own sphere, seems to be firmly established by their success in explaining the facts of experience, are the only method and principles by which truth can be discovered. The method of the physical sciences is observation and experiment, its results being reached by a careful consideration of particular facts and by inferences drawn from them. No doubt these sciences tacitly assume certain conceptions, the truth of which they make no attempt to prove; but this is not evident to the scientific man as such, and therefore he naturally supposes that any other method of investigation than that which in his special region has yielded such brilliant results, must be a false or a defective method. He is therefore disposed to protest, and even to sneer at, any *a priori* method, as he calls it, i.e. any method which goes beyond the interpretation of particular facts. And if this is the method of the special sciences, its fundamental principle is that of natural causation. The sole object of these sciences is to discover the causal connections of particular facts. It was therefore but natural, in the age of Kant, when the physical sciences had achieved such triumphant results, especially at the hands of Newton, that there should be a strong tendency to interpret all

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 55

things in the light of the law of natural causation. Now, when this law is extended to the life of man, it seems as if there were no room for freedom. If man, like other beings, is under the dominion of natural law, how can we suppose that his acts proceed from himself in any other sense than that in which we may speak of the movements of an animal or even the fall of a stone as spontaneous? And if there is no law but natural causation : if the whole sphere of reality is limited to particular phenomena and their connection with one another : is it not obvious that the ideas of God or of any other supernatural being, together with the immortality of man, must be mere fictions? But when, by what Carlyle calls "victorious analysis," we have got rid of human freedom and immortality, and of God, we shall be forced to throw duty and morality after them. If there is no real agency in man : if his acts are just as much the result of certain external causes as any other phenomenon in nature : then it is obviously absurd to speak of what he *ought* or *ought not* to do, since what in any given case he does is what he *must* do, and cannot possibly help doing. With the disappearance of the belief in moral obligation will also disappear the belief in moral responsibility, at least for anyone who thinks consistently. What a man does not do, what does not proceed from himself, for that he cannot be held responsible. Hence those who attempt to apply to human action the same law as that which they apply to other phenomena, when they are consistent (which they seldom are), tell us that the whole question in regard to human conduct is simply a question, not of what men ought to do, but of what as a matter of fact we find them doing. We may enquire, e.g., into the manner in which men behave under certain forms of society, and we may trace the growth of what are called

## 56 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

moral ideas from age to age ; but all this, while it enables us to understand the natural history of man, does not entitle us to speak of absolute right and wrong, or in any strict sense of moral responsibility. No doubt society, for its own protection, lays down certain laws, and punishes those who violate them ; but this does not mean that those laws are absolutely right ; it only means that they are the necessary instruments for the preservation of social order, and for the security of life and property.

This whole mode of thought obviously raises a problem of a most difficult character. It implies that there is a fundamental antagonism between two ruling ideas, which in a certain sense have made their influence felt from the dawn of human history. On the one hand, knowledge seems to be based on particular experiences, and particular experiences seem to be limited to the sensible and phenomenal ; while, on the other hand, there is in man an aspiration after a higher and better life, an aspiration which for centuries has been bound up with the belief in human freedom, duty, and moral responsibility. With the lucidity of philosophical genius Kant saw, that unless the antagonism of the natural and spiritual could be overcome, the whole life of man was threatened with destruction. The desire for definite knowledge is as strong in man as his belief in the supersensible. He can surrender neither, and yet his life must be in perpetual conflict and dis-harmony with itself, unless he can find some means of reconciling the one with the other.

This apparent opposition of *necessity* and *freedom* has sometimes been sought to be solved by making the things of nature absolutely different in kind from spiritual beings. Thus it may be said that, while inorganic things, and even the highest of the animals,



## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 57

are absolutely subject to the law of mechanical causation, all their movements taking place in response to the action upon them of the environment, man, on the other hand, as a spiritual, self-conscious, and moral being, is the originator of his own acts, and is therefore free. This solution of the problem Kant refused to accept. To remove man in this way from the sphere of natural law seemed to him to be a defiance of the facts and to lead to the denial of all knowledge. So far as we know ourselves, we do not find that our desires and volitions are withdrawn from the influence of external causes. When a man seeks to satisfy any of his desires, is it not the case that the desire is excited by the idea of some object, which presents itself to his imagination as pleasurable? Given the man's natural susceptibility for certain objects rather than for others, and the response which he makes, when placed mentally in the presence of a given object, is just as fixed as the movement of a stone under the influence of external forces. Therefore, Kant maintains that, so far at least as his whole sensitive nature is concerned, it cannot be shown that man is peculiar in being exempted from the law of mechanical causation. If you examine the series of conscious states which occur in the case of any action, you will find, as he contends, that every member of that series follows in as unalterable a way as any series of movements in an unconscious being. It would thus seem that man, like every other being, acts simply as he must act under the given conditions. But, if the desires which act upon a man operate in the same fixed and unchanging way as any other force of nature, how can it possibly be shown that he is free? For many years this problem perplexed Kant, but at length he seemed to himself to have found a way of solving it which allowed the fullest weight to the laws of nature and yet

## 58 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

preserved the independence and freedom of man. From what has been said, it is plain that any attempt to weaken or overthrow the inviolability of natural law could not be endorsed by Kant ; and indeed it was his acceptance of that law, as established by the discoveries of science, and especially by the discoveries of Newton, that first impressed upon him the importance of the problem. But how can it be held, in any sense, that every change in the world, including our own actions, takes place in accordance with the law of mechanical causation, while yet it is affirmed that man is free and self-determined ? Perhaps, Kant answers, we shall be able to get at the root of the matter, if we begin by asking why it is that mathematics and physics have made such remarkable progress, and are now universally regarded as established sciences, while the systems which deal with the supersensible, including the spiritual nature of man, are apparently still as far as ever from the discovery of a solid foundation. No doubt the representatives of these sciences, when they have any theory at all, usually describe their method as one of simple observation ; but if we look more closely, we shall see that mathematics and physics have not advanced by allowing nature to act upon the mind, and simply registering the impressions thus received ; on the contrary, progress has been made by anticipating in the mind the meaning of nature and then going to her and asking questions. The mathematician does not simply *find* his triangles and circles, but *constructs* them ; and the strange thing is that these constructions, which seem to be made in entire independence of nature, yet somehow or other apply to nature ; so that the mathematician confidently affirms, that his conclusions hold good always and necessarily, no matter how sensible objects may otherwise differ. Similarly, the physicist has made

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 59

advances by putting questions to nature, as when Galileo proceeded to interrogate her by causing elastic balls to roll down an inclined plane. All this suggests to us that in some sense nature is the creation of the human mind. This no doubt must seem at first sight a preposterous view to take. How, it may be said, can any man in his senses say that his mind *makes* nature? Does not all knowledge consist in apprehending things as they are, not as we imagine them, or would like them to be? Kant's answer is to point out that it is a great mistake to assume that nature exists, and would be what it is, even if the whole activity of the intelligence which grasps it were absent. If that were so, nature for us would be nothing but the impressions arising in us from moment to moment, and these would never present to our minds even the appearance of an orderly system of objects and events, spread out in space, following one another in time, and connected in fixed and unchanging ways. It is quite true that the earliest phase of our experience as individuals may be described as a mere chaos of impressions of sense; but anyone may see that a chaos of impressions of sense is not what we mean by "nature." Those impressions we do not "make": they are "given" to us; but their interpretation as "objects," or, what is the same thing, our knowledge of nature as a system of "experiences," is due to the character of our perceptive and intellectual faculties, which compel us to present our perceptions as objects in space and time, as belonging to a single system, and as connected together in the unity of a single self-consciousness.

Perhaps we shall best understand what Kant means by contrasting this new view of knowledge with that of Hume. The explanation of causality given by Hume reduces it to a mere habitual sequence

## 60 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of impressions and copies of impressions. This doctrine seemed to Kant to show that Hume had not grasped the true principle of knowledge. If Hume is right, it is obvious that there can be for us no system of nature, because there are no universal and necessary judgments. The result of Hume's theory therefore is, not to explain knowledge, but to explain it away. But to Kant it seemed perfectly certain that the pure sciences at least, viz., pure mathematics and pure physics, contain universal and necessary judgments: judgments therefore which are true, not merely at a particular time and in a particular place, but at all times and in all places. What, then, he asks, must be the character of our knowledge, if we are to account for the fact that there are such judgments? Mathematics obviously rests upon the ideas of space and time, and these again are not something which we can perceive by our senses. From moment to moment there arise in us different sensations, but the perception of external objects or of internal events is not possible apart from space and time, and these are not given in sensation, but are pre-supposed as conditions without which we should have no consciousness of sensible objects. As permanent elements pre-supposed in all our experience, they are involved in all our experience of objects, and they could not be so involved, as Kant argues, were they not the inalienable forms bound up with the very existence of our perceptive faculty. That being so, the objects of our experience can have no existence except within our experience. No doubt our impressions of sense are due to things that exist independently of our knowledge, but these must not be identified with the objects of our experience. The objects of our perception exist

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 61

nowhere but for the percipient subject. And the same thing is true of these objects, viewed as connected together in the system of experience. The work of so connecting them is done by the understanding; which, like perception, has its own fixed and unchanging constitution,—a constitution which is expressed in the forms of thought that Kant calls the "categories." To the existence of "nature"—understanding by this "the cosmos of experience."—our faculties of knowledge are therefore indispensable, for "nature" is no independent thing—no reality existing apart from us—but that system of experiences which is constituted by our minds as combining the elements of perception into an ordered whole. It is thus made clear to us why the man of science assumes that nature is subject to inviolable law. It is so subject, because nature is itself constituted by our minds, which by their very character order all our experiences under those forms of perception and thought which belong to us.

But, having thus confirmed the preconception of the sciences, that nature is an unchanging system, it seems as if we had only made any solution of the problem of freedom more hopeless than ever. At this point Kant gives the discussion a subtle and unexpected turn. What is this inviolable system of nature, but the product of our own activity as conscious beings? As such is it not obvious that it cannot be used as an engine for the destruction of a being without which it would not exist at all? If the system of nature existed apart from any activity on our part, no doubt it would be impossible to make room for any self-activity in knowledge; but as it has no existence anywhere but in our consciousness, it cannot destroy the very activity

## 62 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

without which it would have no existence. Our minds, it is true, do not contribute the sensible differences of things, but they do supply the bonds which connect those differences into the unity of self-consciousness. Thus it is at once suggested to us, that for the mind which imposes them they cannot be really bonds. Necessity can only mean dependence upon something foreign, whereas the law of natural causation is no foreign yoke to which the human mind must submit, but its own law. And this idea receives strong confirmation when we see the relation of the system of nature to the idea of absolute reality. If the objects of our experience were things in themselves, no doubt it would be impossible for us to maintain that man in his true nature is free from the law of external necessity. For, if things as they really exist are what we are compelled to represent them as being, all things, including our own actions, must be subject to the law of natural causation, and therefore we can by no possibility be free. But ultimate reality on the one hand, and nature, or the system of our experience on the other hand, are by no means the same, as may readily be seen when we contrast what we know with what reason demands. Whatever else may be said of it, ultimate reality must be a whole, a unity; for beyond it there can be nothing. That is the plain and simple demand which reason makes upon anything that claims to be absolutely real. Is the system of nature, then, a whole? Is it a closed sphere, beyond which nothing else can be? or does it bear on its face the marks of finitude and limitation? That it is not a whole is at once apparent the moment we compare it with our idea of a whole. Take it, e.g., from the point of view of Time. If

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 63

the world-events constitute an absolute totality, then we must hold, either that the world has existed from all eternity, or that it began to be at a certain moment of time. Now, no matter which of these suppositions we adopt, it may at once be shown that it is incompatible with the nature of our experience. If the world never began to be, then an eternity must have elapsed up to any given point of time—say, the present moment; and, by the very form of our experience, we can only present before our minds events in time by passing in imagination from the one event back to the other. But, obviously, an infinite series of moments of time will require an eternity to sum them up. Hence, an infinite series of moments of time is an impossible experience; and, consequently, the supposition that the world is eternal is incompatible with the conditions of our experience. Now, if the world is not eternal, we are thrown back on the other horn of the dilemma, viz., that the world began at a certain point of time. But this alternative is just as incompatible with experience as the other. If the world began to be at a certain moment of time, then prior to that moment there was nothing but blank, empty time. Now, nothing can begin to be unless there is some reason for its beginning to be. But there is nothing in empty time to explain why anything should begin to be. Consequently, the supposition that the world began to be at a certain moment of time conflicts with the very conditions of our experience. We can experience nothing which absolutely begins to be: all the things that we experience are changes which presuppose something prior on which they depend. Now, what is to be inferred from this peculiar fact, that we can neither experience, or rather can neither conceive the possibility of experiencing, the eternity of the world, nor the

## 64 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

absolute beginning of the world? Surely our reason cannot compel us to adopt either of two contradictory propositions. We cannot say that the world is eternal, because that seems incompatible with the conditions of our knowledge: we cannot say that the world absolutely began to be, for that contradicts the principle of causality. But, on the other hand, we cannot accept a flat contradiction. How, then, are we to escape from the dilemma? Kant's answer is: we escape from it the moment we perceive that Time is merely a form of our experience. When we speak of absolute reality, there is no question as to whether it absolutely began to be or never began to be, because there is no question of Time at all. The reason that our experience is never a complete whole arises from the peculiar character of Time. Time is an unending series, and there is no possibility of summing up an unending series. Whatever, then, is represented as in time is thereby precluded from being a whole. And as the same thing is true of space, the conclusion we had already reached, that space and time are merely the forms of our perception, is confirmed by the insoluble contradictions into which we fall when we assume space and time to be characteristics of ultimate reality. And the same thing applies to the principle of causality itself. Causality as a principle of experience we have already seen to involve a reference to time. What it asserts is, that all successive events as in time imply a fixed order of connection, such that *A* must precede and *B* follow. Now this principle will clearly never give us totality: for, since it implies that an effect had a precedent cause, while this cause again is itself an effect having another prior cause, and so on to infinity, it follows that a totality as a series of causes is an impossible experience. In short, the fact that the principle of

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 65

causality is specified or limited to time, involves that it can never give us a completely rounded system of reality; the most that it can do is to suggest the existence of a reality which it is itself unable to characterize.

We are now in a better position to understand how Kant solves the apparent contradiction of necessity and freedom. Man seems to be bound in the chains of necessity, because, like other objects of experience, his acts seem to proceed from a cause external to himself. But Kant has shown, as he believes, that the principle of causality is itself in a sense the creation of the human mind, and hence that there must be a point of view from which man can be shown to be free from the bonds of merely external causation. For, the totality of the objects of experience, or the system of nature, is after all phenomenal. The phenomenal character of all the objects of our knowledge is clearly indicated by the fact that our experience can never be an absolute whole. Even the category of causality, so far as it is specified and thereby limited by its relation to events in time, does not enable us to determine the world as a complete whole. The process by which we characterize and connect events in time is unending; which shows that the pure conception of causality is not really satisfied by the objects that fall within the range of our knowledge. The truth is, that, by following events back along the chain of temporal causation, we do not even in the end reach what can in the strict sense be called a cause; for a cause, if it is to be completely explanatory of an effect, cannot itself be an effect dependent upon a prior cause. Our intelligence demands a cause that is not itself an effect, or, in other words, a self-cause or a self-active being. Does such a cause actually exist? Obviously we shall never



## 66 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

find a cause of this kind—a cause that absolutely originates or initiates effects—within the region of sensible experience; for, as we have seen, the conditions of sensible experience are such that no object is known to undergo any change without being acted upon by an object external to it. But a self-active cause must be acted upon purely by itself, not by any other being. It follows that a self-active cause existing in time is a contradiction in terms. This conclusion has been forced upon us by the abortive character of the attempt to find a real cause within the realm of sensible experience. We can pass from effect to cause, from this cause to a prior cause, in our search for an unconditioned cause; but so long as we are limited by the conditions of our experience, such a cause we shall never find. But why should there not be a self-active cause, which is free from the conditions of time? This at least is obvious, that unless there is such a cause there is no free cause. Let us, then, admit the possibility of there being, not merely a phenomenal cause of events, but a real or ideal, or, as Kant calls it, a "noumenal" cause of those events. By this supposition we provide for the possibility that we are ourselves in our true nature such self-active causes, while admitting that our inner being can never be brought within the circle of our knowledge. As we have proved knowledge or experience to be a limited sphere, there is nothing impossible in the supposition that our true being is hidden behind the veil of our phenomenal being, and that every act we do is self-originated, though from the point of view of our knowledge we must figure it as falling within the system of nature, and therefore as subject to natural causation.

Now, is there anything in our own nature which would lead us to affirm at least the possibility that we are

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 67

self-active or self-determinant beings? Kant's answer is, that we have undoubted grounds for this idea. The whole system of experience is constituted by the activity of our minds as acting upon the sensible by means of the universal forms of space and time. No element can enter into the system of experience unless there is a single self-conscious subject, which combines it with other elements in one system. In other words, we are for ourselves not merely *objects* of experience; we are also the *subjects*, for which alone those objects exist. It is true that as objects for ourselves we must regard ourselves as we regard other objects, and so far we have no reason to believe in our own self-activity. But there is this fundamental difference between man and all other beings of which he has experience; that, while they are exhaustively characterized when they are affirmed to be objects, man, in virtue of his intelligence, is conscious of himself as the subject for which all objects are, including himself as a phenomenon. This pure self-consciousness points beyond the phenomenal world, and so far is in harmony with the idea that man in his true self or inner nature is self-determinant or free. Now, suppose for a moment that this free subject actually exists: what would be its relation to the phenomenal self? in other words, how would man as subject be related to man as object? The relation would be somewhat of this character:— Every act which a man ascribes to himself would proceed from his own initiative; no other being in the universe could, on this supposition, interfere with his freedom or self-activity. But, though as a matter of fact his acts would all flow from his own will, it would nevertheless be true that to himself, as a knowing being, they would appear to be necessitated. We can thus see how it is possible that an act which proceeds



## 68 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

purely from the self-conscious subject, may yet present itself to that subject under the form of time, and therefore as in conformity with the law of natural causality.

So far freedom has not been proved, but has only been shown to be possible. Is there any way by which its reality may be established? Kant affirms that there is such a way. It is true that so far as theoretical reason is concerned, we can never get beyond the mere idea that freedom is possible, because of the limitations under which it operates. But it is different when we come to consider man, not as a knowing, but as an acting being; in other words, when we consider him from the point of view of his practical reason or will. For man cannot act at all except under the idea of freedom; in other words, action in a self-conscious being presupposes the power of rising in idea above the phenomenal. If man were nothing but a link in the chain of phenomena, he would obviously never have the idea of any reality higher than the phenomenal. But in every act that he does he holds more or less clearly before himself the idea of himself as capable of a higher form of existence than that in which he finds himself. Thus man can act at all only under the presupposition that he is not a mere object like other objects, but is a self-conscious subject. Even this, however, does not prove freedom. It no doubt shows us how highly probable it is that man is free; but what it actually proves is only that man has the idea or thinks of himself as free. We must therefore have a more solid basis for freedom before we can regard it as established beyond cavil. Is there such a basis? Again Kant answers in the affirmative: there is the immovable basis of the moral law. That law cannot for a moment be identified with merely natural law; for the peculiarity of moral law is, that it

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 69

is essentially an ideal, expressing not what *is* or *has been* or *will be*, but what *ought to be*. There is no meaning in speaking of *ought* when we refer to a merely natural object. We cannot say that a stone *ought* to fall to the ground, or that a dog *ought* to bark; what we must say is that stones *do* fall to the ground; dogs *do* bark. But a being who can say to himself, "I *ought* to do this," "I *ought* not to do that," lives in a world of pure ideas, a "world not realized," which can never have a local habitation, but exists only as an intelligible or spiritual or ideal realm. A man does not judge himself by what he has been or is or will be, but by what he *ought* to be. It may be pointed out to him, that every act he has done had a special cause in a preceding act, and yet his belief remains unshaken, that he could have acted otherwise, and if he has acted contrary to duty, that he *ought* to have acted otherwise. Here is something that differs *toto coelo* from anything that presents itself within the sphere of knowledge proper. A being who has the idea of moral obligation, who creates spontaneously an intelligible world and judges himself by its standard, must from the very nature of the case be independent of the phenomenal world with its law of natural causation. If he were merely one object among others in the realm of nature, he would never have this idea of a moral or intelligible world at all; and therefore we are entitled to reason back from the fact that man has this idea to what it presupposes; and what it presupposes is a being liberated from the chain of natural necessity, a self-active or free being.

I have dwelt at what may seem inordinate length on Kant's reconciliation of freedom and necessity, because only by comprehending the grounds of that reconciliation is it possible to understand his moral proofs of the

## 70 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

existence of God and the immortality of man. These must seem arbitrary and baseless to anyone who does not see why Kant regards the denial of any *knowledge* of God and immortality as essential to *faith* in their existence. His reason for insisting so strongly on this point is that, in his view, we should otherwise be compelled to believe that there was nothing higher than the system of nature; whereas, admitting to the fullest extent the limitation of knowledge to that system, we may go on to build on the place left vacant by theoretical reason a solid edifice of reality by an appeal to the moral consciousness. It is in this way, as we have seen, that freedom is established; and by a similar line of thought Kant seeks to show that, though God and immortality cannot be theoretically proved, they are postulates which we as rational beings are entitled, and indeed compelled, to make. For there are, as Kant contends, certain beliefs and hopes which are inextricably bound up with the moral consciousness. It is perfectly true that there is nothing in the world of nature affording the least support to them; on the contrary, if we had no other source of illumination than that which is afforded by the natural sciences, we should never even dream of God, freedom, or immortality. But, as we have already seen, the system of nature is after all simply the manner in which we, as intelligent beings, interpret our sensible experiences; and as we must therefore in a sense be beyond nature, we must impose upon ourselves a higher law or principle. Nor is it any objection to the ideal of reason that it can never be completely realized in any actual community; for it yet remains the absolute standard by which we judge ourselves and others.

It may, however, be objected that it is illegitimate to base reality upon our desires. Granting that a belief

## SCIENCE, MORALITY AND RELIGION 71

in God and a sure hope of immortality can alone bring permanent satisfaction, is it not a fallacy to take the strength of our longing as a guarantee that it is directed to what really exists?

Kant's answer is, that while our ordinary wishes are in no way prophetic of their realization, it is different in the case of those desires which have their source in our rational and moral nature. The one class, as peculiar to this or that individual, and arising from his special disposition and circumstances, may never be realized; the other, as springing from reason, receives the sanction of reason. Of this latter class is the will to believe in God, freedom, and immortality. As rational beings we demand their existence. For reason demands that conformity with the moral law should ultimately result in happiness; and if we postulate the union of virtue and happiness, we must also postulate the existence of an Infinite Being to ensure the possibility of that union, and immortality as the condition of its realization. With perfect conviction we may affirm the objective reality of the three Ideas of reason; and therefore God, freedom, and immortality have the absolute guarantee of a rational faith. How far this method of defending the higher interests of man can be regarded as satisfactory must be left over for consideration at our next meeting.



## LECTURE FOURTH

### IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

AT our last meeting we were engaged in the attempt to get an insight into the manner in which Kant, while discarding all external authority and accepting without reservation the inviolability of natural law, yet attempts to save the belief in freedom and moral responsibility, and to establish the existence of God and the immortality of man, by means of what he calls "postulates of practical reason." Knowledge, as he holds, never extends beyond the realm of nature, and, therefore, it is precisely coincident with the sphere of the special sciences. Kant, however, points out that nature is not a reality which exists in separation from conscious beings : it is the product of the activity by which those beings, in virtue of the universal and necessary forms of perception and thought, which belong to them as men, construct for themselves an ordered system of experience. While all objects and events take their appointed place in the one system of nature, that system does not itself form a complete whole ; for no such whole can be obtained consistently with the inclusion of all objects and events in space and time, and their external connection with one another through the principle of reciprocal causation. And as nothing can satisfy our

intelligence short of an absolutely complete whole, while the conditions of our experience preclude us from ever reaching it, we are forced to conclude that we never come face to face with reality as it is in itself, and must content ourselves with that distorted or blurred image of it which alone is possible for us. This limitation applies not only to inanimate things and the animals, but also to ourselves so far as we are objects for ourselves ; and, therefore, we do not, strictly speaking, know ourselves as we are, but only as we appear under the limitations imposed upon us by the character of our knowledge. But upon this very limitation Kant bases his main defence of our moral and religious interests. As we do not really know ourselves as we are, there is nothing in the character of our knowledge, as he argues, to show that in our true nature we are not free moral agents, and thus the way is left open for the defence of freedom and immortality on the basis of the moral consciousness. Moreover, the rational demand for unity can only be satisfied by the discovery of a principle comprehending both nature and man, object and subject ; and therefore the Idea of God inevitably arises in the search for that complete unity which alone can give satisfaction to reason. It is true that such a unity we can never know ; but here, as in the case of the Idea of freedom, we find that there is nothing in the conclusions of science to preclude the existence of God, if there are good grounds in another direction for believing in it. That such grounds do exist in the moral consciousness Kant contends, arguing that here is a case where our desires and hopes are the perfect guarantee of the reality of their objects. In the consciousness of moral obligation we come upon a principle which lifts us above all the desires that aim at merely individual happiness. So far as I hold myself bound to act in

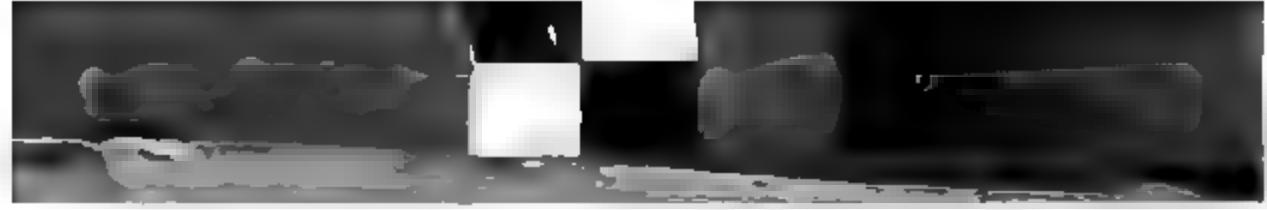
## 74 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

conformity with the ideal of a perfectly moralized community, of which every man recognizes himself to be a member, I refuse to make the very smallest concession to the clamours of natural inclination. If duty demands even the sacrifice of my life, and with it the loss of all possible satisfaction of my sensuous nature, reason tells me that I must obey. The solicitations of my lower nature are hard to withstand, especially when they are reinforced by a sort of moral cunning, which whispers that this is an exceptional case, or that it is justifiable because of the beneficial consequences to flow from it ; but we all know that the moral law admits of no paltering with its absolute commands, but must be obeyed absolutely and unconditionally. Thus we frame for ourselves the ideal of a community of rational beings, each of whom places himself and others under a universal system of moral laws, and this ideal we regard as expressing, and alone expressing, the true nature of man. It will not be denied that a society in which every one should at all times will the moral law, would be infinitely higher than any that has appeared on earth. Nor will Kant admit that morality may be merely a beautiful illusion, drawing man on by a sort of noble craft to seek the good of all. The moral consciousness, as he maintains, is the deepest thing in us. It is the point at which we are united to all possible rational beings, finite or infinite, and upon it depend the whole of our spiritual interests. If we had no other source of illumination than that which is afforded by the natural sciences, those interests would certainly vanish away as empty dreams. In a purely mechanical system there is no place for spirit, and if we were ourselves but links in an endless chain of causation, we should have no guarantee of freedom or immortality or God. But the system of nature is our own construction,

and therefore cannot be for us an absolute limit. When, therefore, we find in ourselves aspirations which have in them no taint of selfishness, but which are endorsed by reason, as essential to the realization of our moral nature, we are entitled to regard them as based upon reality. "The righteous man," says Kant, "may say : I *will* that there should be a God ; I *will* that, though *in* this world of natural necessity, I should not be *of* it, but should also belong to a purely intelligible world of freedom ; finally, I *will* that my duration should be endless. On this faith I insist and will not let it be taken from me."<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy of Kant, as even the rapid outline just drawn may have suggested, lifts us above the old dualism of matter and mind, object and subject, and has made it impossible for anyone who has mastered its principle to suppose that reality can be revealed either in the immediacy of sensation and impulse, or in any mere process of abstract reflection. For, just as matter is never given in our experience as constituting a separate and independent realm of its own, but always as in conjunction with mind ; so there is no such thing as an experience which consists of isolated sensations and impulses, and just as certainly none composed entirely of "bloodless categories." Since Kant the problem must necessarily be, whether the whole world of our experience, within which matter and mind are subordinate distinctions, is identical with reality, and whether morality and religion can be demonstrated, or have only the warrant of faith. But while Kant has shown that the old antagonisms of the sensible and the intellectual, the material and the spiritual, spring from natural but untenable preconceptions, it cannot be denied that he has given occasion for his successors to fall back into

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in E. Caird's *Evolution of Religion*, i. 339.



## 76 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

new forms of dualism, which are only less fatal than the old, because they put the problem in a way that brings us nearer to its solution. It is with the object of aiding in that solution that I propose to bring before you what seem to me to be certain inadequacies in the doctrine of Kant which prevent it from being entirely satisfactory.

When Kant took up the problem of philosophy, it was tacitly assumed either that the world as known to us is complete in itself prior to, and independently of, our apprehension of it, or that the only reality of which we have direct knowledge consists of our own ideas or states of consciousness. In the one case knowledge was supposed to consist in the passive apprehension of what already exists; in the other, it was denied that we have any experience, or at least any direct experience, of a world lying beyond consciousness. Now, Kant began by challenging this whole point of view. We cannot, he said, legitimately start with the assumption of a world lying beyond our minds, which yet is of the same essential character as the world of our experience; nor, again, can the position be defended, that we are directly conscious only of ideas in our own minds. If we take the former view, it is inconceivable how we can construct a science of nature; for, on the assumption of the pure passivity of the mind, our judgments about nature can never have any wider application than to the limited number of objects that have fallen within our experience, whereas a science of nature must consist in judgments that are true universally and necessarily. If, again, we take the latter view, we can say nothing about the nature of the world; for that which is assumed to be beyond the confines of our consciousness cannot even be known to exist. We must therefore revise our whole way of looking at things. Nature, or the so-called "external" world, is not external to mind,

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 77

but only "external" in the sense that it consists of objects outside of one another spatially, or of events external to one another in the sense of being discrete and "marching single in an endless file." We are, therefore, just as directly conscious of matter as of mind. Moreover, the external or material world is not given to us in our sensations; for sensations in their singleness are not knowledge: only when they are ordered and combined under the forms of perception and thought have we any experience of nature. Now, these forms do not, like sensation, vary with each individual and change upon us from moment to moment; they are identical in all men. Thus, we all construct an external world which, vary as it may in its sensible aspects, is fundamentally the same in this sense, that it consists of objects in space and events in time, all of which are connected together by the bond of natural causation. This is the world which it is the business of the sciences to survey and reduce to specific laws.

It is obvious from this account that Kant never for a moment supposed that the problem of knowledge is to explain the steps by which the individual gradually advances in knowledge, by the interpretation of his particular sensible experiences; what he sought to account for was that orderly world of facts in which every man lives, though it is only expressly conceived as a system by those who have learned the lesson of modern science. The development of knowledge in the individual is a question which falls to be answered by the psychologist, whereas the task of the critical philosopher is to determine what are the conditions under which every one comes to the consciousness of a system of experience, and acquiesces in the universal and necessary judgments by which it is constituted.

## 78 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Kant assumed, as a basis for his investigation, the principle that all men are of the same essential nature, and therefore that the fundamental features in the experience of one man are identical in kind with the fundamental features in the experience of all men. Of course each of us has his own individual experience, for which the experience of another cannot be a substitute ; but, differ as we may in particulars, we all organize our experience into a system in virtue of the inalienable birthright of our intelligence, and indeed into a system which is identical for all men, however they may differ in respect of the data so organized. Were it not so, as Kant maintains, our intelligence would not be a principle of unity, but a principle of contradiction.

So far as he contends for the identity of intelligence in all men, Kant seems to me to insist upon a principle which is of supreme importance, a principle which is rejected or denied by those who seek, with what seems manifest inconsistency, to commend for our acceptance the doctrine that in the end what we call knowledge is nothing but the "working conceptions" by which we are enabled to reduce to order the confused mass of impressions ever crowding upon us. But, although he would have rejected without hesitation this recent development of his philosophy, maintaining as he does that the system of nature is necessarily the same for all men, Kant's theory of knowledge rests upon an assumption which logically leads to the conclusion that reality cannot be a rational and self-consistent whole. That assumption is, that the data furnished to us by our sensible experiences are infected by certain fundamental and insuperable limitations, with the result that what we call knowledge is not really the comprehension of that which *is*, but only of that which *appears*. We

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 79

can have no experience, as Kant contends, except under the forms of space and time ; and these forms prove themselves not to be determinations of reality in its ultimate nature by the fact that reason, compelled to operate with sensible data, cannot reach the unity for which it is its very nature to seek, and is thus forced to recognize that the system of nature, which alone falls within knowledge, is at the most but a poor analogue and adumbration of the true nature of things.

Here, as I think, we come upon the vulnerable spot in the Critical theory of knowledge. It is no doubt true that our experience is never complete, and that the scientific view of the world is far from final ; but we cannot infer from either of these facts that reality lies beyond the sphere of our knowledge. This point is so fundamental, and has so important a bearing upon the philosophy of religion, that it seems necessary to devote special attention to it.

Why does Kant hold that the objects of human experience are fundamentally different from things in themselves, so that we can only define the latter by negative predicates ? One reason seems to be, that he has not entirely freed himself from the individualistic point of view against which his whole philosophy is in one sense a protest. If we ask how the individual man comes to have the consciousness of a sensible object, it is natural to say that his knowledge results from the action upon him of that object. And there is no doubt that this explanation is correct enough, so far as the only question asked is in regard to the conditions under which a certain sensation arises. Thus, e.g., the sensation which I experience from the heat of a fire can be determined in the same way, and on the same principle, as any other event ; in other words, it can be brought within the inviolable system of nature

## 80 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

by the application of the principle of causality. So long as we remain at this point of view, therefore, we must say, that between the sensations of the individual and the external object which acts as a stimulus, there is a causal relation the same in kind as that which subsists between any two external objects—say, the heat of the sun and the heat of a stone, or, more precisely, the molecular vibrations in each. It does not follow, however, that we can apply the same principle of explanation to the relation between the external world and the knowledge by the individual of that world. For that knowledge is not the effect of the action upon consciousness of an object which exists independently of that consciousness. We are very apt to think of the matter in that way, because we are usually interested, not in the problem of knowledge, but in the characteristics of the objects known; and, therefore, we almost inevitably overlook the fact that for us there are no objects but those which fall within the sphere of our knowledge. When we say that the sensation of heat is due to the action of a fire, we are moving within a world that could not exist for us at all but for the complex activity implied in the interpretation of our sensation as a fact which takes its place in the orderly system of experience—a system which, as Kant himself has shown, has its being for us only because of the unifying activity of our minds. Overlooking this activity, and fixing our attention upon the sensation of the moment, we refer it to an external object as its cause, and imagine that no further explanation is needed, or can be given. In reality we have in this way explained nothing, but have simply *assumed* the knowledge of a system of experience, and pointed out that the sensation in question falls within it, and

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 81

is relative to a particular external object which also falls within it. But the question of knowledge is not in regard to the connection of one thing with another within a world assumed to be already known, but how we come to have the knowledge of a world of objects at all. To say that this world *acts* upon our minds is the same as saying that a world which exists only by the activity of our minds is the cause of that activity.

The world is not the *cause* of our knowledge; for, without knowledge, there is no cause. The principle of causality cannot be explained as the result of the relation between object and subject, because apart from the subject as interpreting his experiences there is no object. When, therefore, any attempt is made so to explain it, the so-called explanation must necessarily presuppose the very principle which is sought to be explained. If the validity of the principle of causality is admitted, there is no difficulty in accounting for the origination of a given sensation; for all that in that case is necessary is to assign the conditions under which it arises; but obviously we cannot account for the origination of the principle of causation by appealing to the very principle which is to be accounted for. Now, no one has pointed this out more clearly than Kant himself; but, while he contends with irresistible force that the principle of causality cannot be derived from the particular experiences which it makes possible, he never gets rid of the idea that the *sensible* element in experience is the result of the action on the knowing subject of an object that exists prior to the activity of the object. And as the object of experience is analysed into that sensible element in conjunction with the forms of perception and thought, Kant is precluded from identifying the object which *causes* the sensation with the object as *known*; so that the former lapses into

## 82 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

a thing-in-itself, of which we can say nothing but that it *is*, while the latter is regarded as the *appearance* of an object which does not itself appear, but falls beyond the sphere of knowledge.

It cannot be denied that there is much plausibility in Kant's reference to things-in-themselves as the source of the sensations which we as individuals experience. Obviously, we do not make sensations for ourselves, but must take them as they come, and they stubbornly resist all our efforts to spirit them away. Naturally enough, therefore, we come to look upon ourselves as the passive recipients of impressions coming from without; and when, with Kant, we recognize that the objects of our experience are constituted by the combining activity of our own minds, we inevitably think of the impressions themselves as somehow related to a real object which does not fall within knowledge, and therefore must be distinguished from the object as known to us. But, if we consider the matter more carefully, it becomes evident that we are the victims of a confusion of ideas. My sensations I certainly cannot make or unmake; but it by no means follows that they are produced in me by a cause which lies beyond the circle of my knowledge. If I ask what place they have in my experience as a whole, I can trace out and assign the elements in it which are necessary as the condition of their existence, but by so doing I do not by any means explain their ultimate source. The only explanation which can give final satisfaction is one that assigns, not merely the particular conditions under which my sensations arise, but the conditions of my total consciousness; and not merely of my consciousness, but of all consciousness, actual or possible; and obviously such an explanation lifts us above the system of nature altogether. It is this

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 83

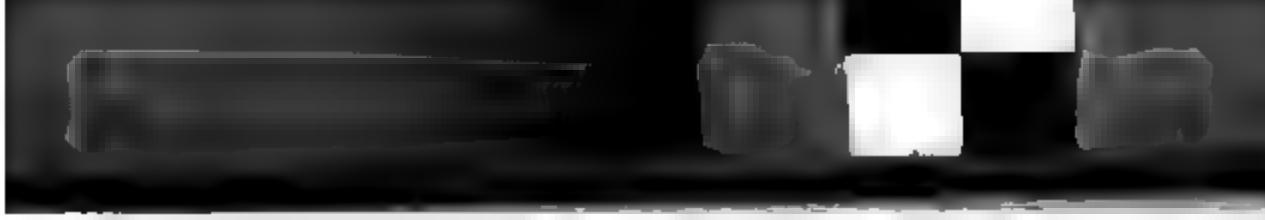
ultimate reality, in fact, which Kant falsely identifies with the unknown thing-in-itself, and thus is led to hold that the totality of our experience is confined within the sphere of phenomena. Seeing clearly that the system of nature is not a "closed sphere," he sets up the idea of a reality which escapes from its limits, and infers that this reality, as falling beyond experience, is not an object of knowledge. What he should really have inferred is, that, to prevent the system of nature from falling to pieces as a mere arbitrary construction of our finite minds, we must seek to carry back our knowledge of that system to its ultimate presuppositions. If this can be done, what Kant calls the thing-in-itself will no longer baffle our efforts to comprehend it.

Now, when we have got rid of the illusory thing-in-itself, and grasped the principle that the only reality which has any meaning for us is that which falls within the circle of our experience, we begin to see that we can no longer accept the arbitrary limits assigned to knowledge. Kant assumes that knowledge is coincident with the mechanical system within which the natural sciences voluntarily confine themselves. Taking this view, he is led to hold that we can have experience only of objects in space and time, as acting and reacting on each other, and that any other conception of the world, though it may not be false, at any rate cannot be regarded as knowledge. One of the consequences of this assumption is, that as our own desires and volitions are events, they come under the same inviolable law of causation as other events; and, therefore, we have no "experience" or knowledge of ourselves as free agents, nor as a consequence of ourselves as moral beings. No doubt Kant would restore, under the name of "faith," what he denies as

## 84 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

"knowledge"; but, at least in the first instance, he seems to place freedom and morality on a very precarious footing. Is there, then, any valid reason for limiting knowledge, in the way Kant has done, to objects and events which fall within the "system of nature"?

Not only does the limitation seem to be indefensible in itself, but it may be shown, as I think, that it is not consistent with the "new way of ideas" opened up by Kant himself. What is the "system of nature"? It is the real world as it exists for us in virtue of our intelligence. No doubt that system is no arbitrary creation of ours, but it exists for us only because we are capable of comprehending the indissoluble connection of objects, a connection without which the world would fall to pieces, like a house when its supports are withdrawn. In other words, the world is transparent to us just in so far as it is rational or intelligible; and, therefore, it can be no mere aggregate or collection of isolated atoms, but must be a whole, all the parts of which imply one another. Now, if this is so, we begin to see that the "system of nature," as it is viewed by the special sciences, is after all only a partial and inadequate representation of the world as it really is. The real world is a mechanical system, or, rather, with the object of attaining a clear and definite grasp of its elements, it may be viewed as a mechanical system; but it is so much more, that any one who regards that mode of conception as ultimate will find himself landed in contradiction. For that "system," taken by itself, is very far from being self-supporting or self-complete. It exists only for a rational or intelligent subject; and if this subject is left out of account, it vanishes away. The only foundation, therefore, upon which a real science of nature can be based, is reason, and if the system of nature does not pre-



## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 85

suppose a rational and intelligible whole, it can at the most be nothing but a well-ordered fiction. Now, a collection of objects and events, externally related to one another, but not expressing a single self-differentiating principle, cannot possibly satisfy the rational demand for a whole which needs nothing else for its presupposition. As Kant himself points out, there is no completeness or individuality in any accumulation of objects in space and time, because no magnitude, extensive or intensive, can even be conceived which is complete in itself. In truth, the illimitable extension and the infinite divisibility of the extended universe exist at all only as abstractions of a thinking consciousness. Now, we are surely entitled to reason back from our experience to all that is necessary to make it possible, unless we adopt the self-contradictory attitude of the pure sceptic, and maintain that we cannot even be sure that we experience what we experience. And Kant, above all men, is bound to admit the validity of this method, for it is that which he has himself applied in justification of the special sciences. The system of experience, then, as we may fairly argue, presupposes a thinking intelligence as its correlate, or rather as the condition without which it could not exist at all. But if so, is it not evident that we must include within the sphere of knowledge the intelligence without which the system of nature is impossible? And not only so, but we must affirm of that system all that is necessary to account for its intelligibility. When, therefore, we find, as Kant himself shows we do find, that a world which is conceived simply as an aggregate of objects, acting and reacting on one another, is not a complete whole, because it is not self-explaining, must we not go on to seek for a higher and more satisfactory way of



## 86 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

regarding it? An interminable chain of events, hanging suspended in the air at both ends, is obviously the mere fragment of a real universe, not the universe in its totality. For, after all, mind exists, and in any ultimate theory must have *at least* as much reality as the objects contrasted with and yet related to it. In mind, therefore, we must seek for the complement to the system of nature which is required to round it off. On the other hand, we cannot regard mind simply as another sphere, or hemisphere, externally attached to matter; for, as we have seen, the system of nature must be so far akin to the intelligence for which it exists as to be comprehensible by it. The universe, then, is a universe in which nature and mind imply each other, but in such a way that, while nature must be intelligible, mind is that for which nature exists. Now, when we ask what must be the character of an intelligible nature, the answer must be, that it is a universe every element of which is inseparable from the whole; in other words, a universe in which there is nothing which could exist were the whole not what it is. And there can be no doubt, I think, that such a whole must contain within itself the principle of its own differentiation; and must therefore be a free, self-determinant, rational whole, which expresses itself in every part, or employs every part as the means of its own self-realization. If this is true, we must conceive of the universe, not merely as organic, but also as spiritual, i.e. as the manifestation of an infinite intelligence. Should it be objected that we have no "knowledge" of such a principle, even granting that we are entitled to claim that it has a firm basis in "faith," I venture to reply, that the objection rests upon some such arbitrary limitation of knowledge as that upon which Kant's

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 87

separation of phenomena from things-in-themselves is based,—a limitation which, as I have tried to show, is not based upon anything in the nature of things. Knowledge, in any proper sense of the term, must include all that the total nature of our experience compels us to affirm; and the total nature of our experience, as I have argued, is incomprehensible unless there is presupposed in it the all-pervasive activity of an infinite Spirit. If it is still objected that the Infinite can never be an object of experience, I answer that while from the nature of the case the source of all reality cannot be identified with any one of its own phases, that does not prevent it from being comprehended by us in so far as we are capable of interpreting what we experience. If any one prefers to call this comprehension of the ultimate principle of the universe *faith* rather than *knowledge*, we need not dispute about words: at any rate, it is a "faith" based upon the insight of reason, and therefore a faith which can only be distinguished from "knowledge," because it is knowledge come to complete self-consciousness. If, on the other hand, by "faith" is meant the blind acceptance of what cannot be established on rational grounds, we must answer, that such a faith is not above, but below, knowledge; or, at least, it can only be held to be higher than knowledge, if it implicitly contains the principle by which alone knowledge can be explained and defended.

We cannot, then, admit with Kant that "knowledge" is limited to the "system of nature" without committing ourselves to the self-contradictory doctrine, that, while nature has no reality apart from intelligence, we can know nature but cannot know the intelligence without which it could not be. If the knowledge of nature is explicable only by showing that it presupposes principles,

## 88 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

and ultimately a single principle, which exist only for a rational subject, it is absurd to hold that we can know nothing of the rational subject, but only of its object. The contrary rather is true; for, if mind is the key to nature, it would be more reasonable to say that we know nothing but mind, nature being simply the object of mind. But neither of these extreme views is true to the facts. (We know the system of nature just because it is intelligible, and we know mind just because it comprehends nature) To limit knowledge to either, or to assign one region to knowledge and another to faith, is to split up the universe into two separate halves, with the result that we have in the one a world which is unintelligible, and in the other an intelligence which is intelligent of nothing.

Why, then, does Kant maintain with such energy that God, freedom, and immortality are based, not upon knowledge, but upon faith? and why does he seek to exalt the practical reason or moral consciousness above the theoretical reason? And if these oppositions must be denied, what transformation of his philosophy results from the vindication of the latter as co-ordinate in value with the former?

Kant's ostensible reason for denying knowledge of anything beyond the system of nature is, as we have seen, his conviction that in no other way can the higher interests and hopes of man be defended. Freedom, as it seemed to him, cannot be saved, consistently with the maintenance of the inviolability of natural law, unless we provide a way of escape from the realm of nature by opening up a supersensible region of which man may be shown from the moral consciousness to be a denizen. Immortality is a dream, if the whole nature of man is exhausted in our knowledge of him as an object like other objects, and therefore as

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 89

subject to the process of decay and death, which is the destiny of all that lives. Nor is there any reason for holding the existence of God, on the basis of experience, since experience can never carry us beyond the dead mechanism of nature. On the other hand, morality and religion demand that we should be free and immortal, and that God should exist as the source of that harmony between the ideal world of morality and the world of our experience. As a means of escape from this intolerable dilemma, Kant insists upon the distinction of the phenomenal from the noumenal world, and the limitation of positive knowledge to the former. Now, if we break down the middle wall of partition between the sensible and the supersensible, as we have insisted upon doing, do we not surrender all the advantages which Kant believed himself to have secured by its erection? If man lives in the same world of experience as other beings, how can he be free? If he is subject to the universal law of nature, how can he be immortal? And if God is but a name for the system of nature, is there any real basis for religion?

The problem thus raised does not seem to me to be so formidable as it appears at first sight, thanks largely to the new outlook opened up by Kant himself. Freedom, as he contends, is not capable of being proved by theoretical reason, though theoretical reason shows that its reality is possible; but, what for knowledge is a vain effort, is a necessary "postulate" of practical reason, which lays down an absolute moral law, and therefore must be held to guarantee the possibility of its fulfilment. This doctrine is obviously incompatible with our contention, that nothing can be justly maintained which cannot be shown to be bound up with the nature of our knowledge; and, therefore, that

## 90 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

unless we *know* ourselves to be free, we have no right to assert that we *are* free. But, with the denial of the critical solution of the apparent union in man of necessity and freedom by the distinction between man as he *appears* and man as he *is*, are we not compelled to surrender freedom altogether, or to fall back upon the old device of seeking for breaks in the continuity of natural law? It does not seem to me that we are impaled on either horn of this dilemma. No doubt we cannot maintain at once that our actions are free and that they are subject to necessity. For Kant this did not involve a flat contradiction, because, while man is in his view really free, he is only in appearance subject to necessity; but for us, who have discarded what we regard as a dangerous and illusory method of defence, no such device is possible. Nor can we adopt the tactics of those who try to show that the laws of nature are after all not so *very* inviolable as they seem, being in fact merely empirical generalizations, which may be outgrown at any time by an extension of knowledge. This essentially sceptical solution, of which I shall say something more in a later lecture, I believe to be on fundamentally false lines; and I therefore assume, with Kant, that there are no breaks in the system of nature, and, in fact, that any relaxation of its rigidity will logically lead to the dissolution of the universe by its reduction to a mere assemblage of accidental particulars. Nature, as the sciences assume, is so welded and compacted together, that, as Hegel said on one occasion, it is at bottom an identical proposition to say, that the annihilation of a single atom of matter would destroy the whole universe. No doubt what are called "laws of nature" are not absolute, in the sense that they can never be superseded; for the history of science is, from one point



## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 91

of view, nothing but the record of the supersession of laws previously regarded as absolute; but it still remains true, that the world is ruled by inviolable law, however imperfectly that law may be grasped in its manifold variations, and that a new law always arises in the effort to explain the difficulties which confront the discoverer who assumes that nature must always be consistent with itself. Are we, then, forced to deny freedom, immortality, and God? Are these objects of our moral and religious faith swept away by the irresistible might of science with its inexorable law?

No such shipwreck of our higher interests need be feared, if we only follow out and interpret in its spirit the truth which Kant has done so much to bring home to us, namely, that the system of nature has in itself neither independence nor completeness. It has no independence, because, when it is separated from the rational whole, of which it is merely a phase or aspect, it becomes unintelligible; and it has no completeness, since no assemblage of objects in space and time will account for the undoubted fact of our experience of ourselves. To urge that nature is governed by inviolable law, does not in the least degree imply that there is no room for freedom. For inviolable law, if we are right in maintaining that the universe is in every part subject to reason, is not a blind necessity, but simply the absolutely rational, and therefore unvarying, expression of a perfect intelligence. If it could be shown that nature is *not* subject to law—that it admits of an arbitrary interference with its uniformity—there would then be the strongest reason for denying the possibility of freedom; for, in the absence of all rational prevision, it would obviously be impossible to foresee what a day or an hour might bring forth,

## 92 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

and therefore impossible to realize our ideals, however high they might be. The more conclusively it is proved that the system of nature admits of no violation, the more assured we ought to be that it is compact of reason. If nature is, so to speak, the body of which reason is the soul ; if it is, in Goethe's phrase, "the visible garment of God" ; there can be no great difficulty in showing that the freedom of man is not only compatible with the inviolability of natural law, but is inconceivable on any other supposition. For, natural law exists for man, not simply as something to which he must submit, but as something which he can comprehend, and therefore something by reference to which he can organize his life. It is no doubt true, that in his first or natural state man finds himself in a world which seems to be hostile to him ; a world in which he has to struggle for existence against forces that seem to be expressly formed to crush him ; but, at the heart of this seeming antagonism lies a divine principle of unification, which the whole process of his life brings to ever clearer consciousness. In times of doubt or despair we may feel inclined to endorse the hopeless creed expressed by Tennyson :

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run ;  
A web is wov'n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun :  
And all the phantom, Nature, stands,  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands."

But deeper comprehension will bring us to the nobler and truer faith, expressed by the same poet, that there is

## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 93

"One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves."

If nature were intrinsically hostile to man, there would be no possibility of reconciliation with it. In truth the long toil of ages is the method by which man learns to comprehend the inner meaning of nature, and thus to make it the means of his own development. The general answer, then, to Kant's dilemma of necessity and freedom is, that what is called necessity is no external compulsion by which freedom is destroyed, but the very condition by which it is realized. The system of nature cannot be a bar to the realization of freedom, since it is simply the immediate form in which the divine reason is expressed. This may be seen more clearly if we look for a moment at the method by which Kant first sets up nature and freedom as opposites, and then attempts to reconcile them.

Freedom, according to Kant, is proved, not directly, but indirectly. We cannot *know* ourselves to be free, because we cannot come in immediate contact with our real inner self, on account of the limitations in the constitution of our minds. But, though we are thus shut out from a direct consciousness of ourselves, there is no doubt of the fact that we have the conception of an intelligible or moral world, and are therefore in idea raised above the world of sensible experience. No being can have such a conception that is not more than a part of nature; therefore, as Kant argues, the fact that we have the conception of an absolute moral law points back to our real freedom or self-determination. Now, this argument obviously depends for its whole force upon the idea that only a free being can have the consciousness of \*

## 94 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

an absolute moral law. In other words, a free being is one that shows its freedom by submitting voluntarily to a law which it recognizes as the true law of its being. If therefore we find that man does not always submit to this absolute law, it would seem to follow that, in so far as he violates it, to that extent he is not free. But, if freedom and morality are strictly correlative, a man must either be always moral or he is not always free. Kant is not unaware of the difficulty, and indeed it was partly a perception of it which led him to distinguish between man as a natural, and man as a rational, being. Man, he contends, is a free being, who originates an absolute moral law as the law of his own nature; but, on the other hand, he is a phenomenal being, affected by certain natural desires or inclinations or passions, which he does not originate, but simply finds in himself. So far as he is a natural being, man is not free. There the law of natural necessity reigns as absolutely as in the case of the inorganic thing or the "mere animal." But this raises a very great difficulty. So far as man is a merely natural being, there is no question of will or action proper at all. I will or act only in so far as I will or act under the idea of myself as the subject to be realized. But the natural desires or passions do not involve the consciousness of oneself as an active subject; and, therefore, as it would seem, they have as little to do with the man himself, the man as a free or rational being, as if they belonged to some other being altogether. Apparently, then, we are left, on Kant's view, with the curious result, that man wills only the moral law; all the "activities," so-called, which arise from the natural inclinations or passions being in no way attributable to himself. Now, Kant, seeing this difficulty, attempts to evade it. It is quite

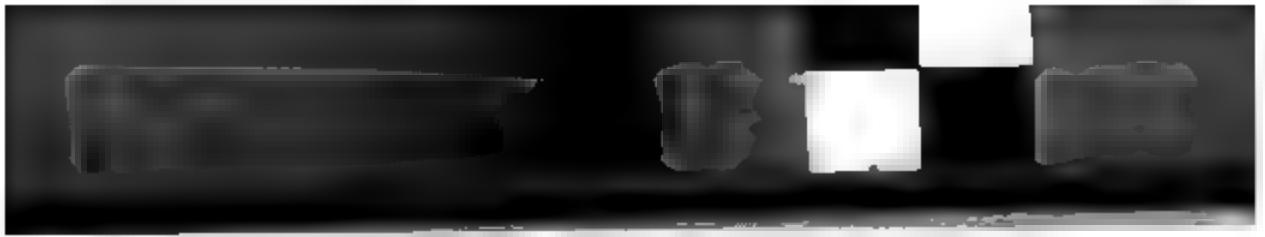
## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 95

true, he says, that man as a merely natural being must be regarded as simply one of the objects of nature, and therefore as subject to purely natural desires, which, like his sensations, he can neither make nor unmake ; but, on the other hand, he is capable of taking up these natural desires into himself and willing them, and when he does so, he voluntarily and freely violates the absoluteness of the moral law. This, then, is Kant's solution of the difficulty, that a free being apparently must be determined solely by the moral law. His view is, that, while man sets up the idea of moral law, and regards it as absolutely binding upon himself, he yet is capable of being influenced by the natural desires, in so far as he takes these up into his will.

But this only raises a new difficulty. How should a free being, who is defined as one that is independent of the sensible world as a whole, and therefore independent of natural inclination or passion, be acted upon by the sensible ? Is it not the very character of a free being, on Kant's own showing, to be independent of natural desire ? If so, how can natural desire act upon him ? Such a conception of the influence of natural desire would seem to bring this supposed free being back into the realm of phenomena ; for now, apparently, his will is acted upon by something external to himself. The difficulty, therefore, is to understand how a free being, defined as Kant defines it, viz. as a supersensible being, should in any way be affected by the sensible. To this objection Kant's answer would be, that the apparent action of sensible desire upon the free subject arises from the limitation of our knowledge. We can only know anything by connecting elements through the principle of causality, and this principle is of such a character that it necessarily represents these elements as externally connected and influenced by one another.

## 96 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Hence, when we come to consider the relation of the free subject to the natural desires, we have no other way of representing that relation than by viewing it as an instance of cause and effect. We are therefore compelled to conceive of the relation between the desires and the free subject as the action of the former upon the latter, though in strict truth a free subject cannot be acted upon by anything else. It is not, therefore, correct to say that desire influences man: what we must rather say is, that man wills freely to act from sensuous desire. This is the final form of the solution, so far as Kant gives it. It does not, however, remove the fundamental difficulty. Why should a free being will to enslave himself? Why should a being whose very nature it is to be free from desire, voluntarily bring himself under the yoke of desire? Kant is forced to confess that this is an ultimate and inexplicable fact. We do find that man somehow is influenced by natural desire, or rather voluntarily submits to its influence; but how a free being should thus fall into this practical contradiction, we are unable to explain. Now, whenever a system takes refuge in an inexplicable fact, it is pretty certain that it contains some fundamental defect. We have, therefore, to ask what is the fundamental defect in Kant's ethical doctrine that prevents him from giving a perfectly satisfactory solution of the problem which he raised. The fundamental defect in the ethics of Kant is similar to that which besets his theory of knowledge. Kant confuses two very different things: the limitation of the human mind at a certain stage and its absolute limitation. He assumes that there is a complete opposition between reason and desire, and therefore that no one who acts from desire can act rationally. But that opposition is based upon the false assumption



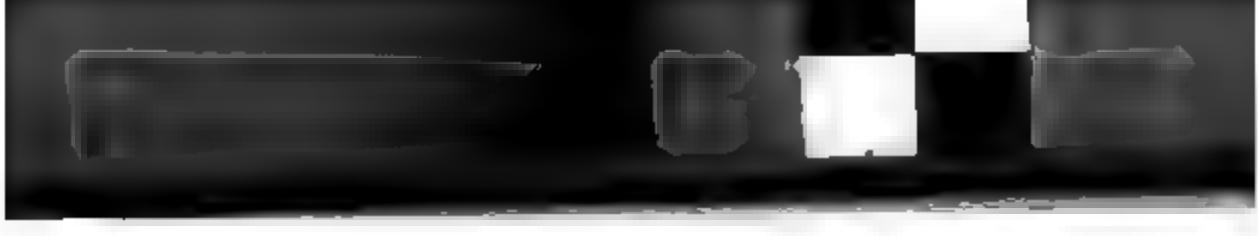
## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 97

that the affections of a self-conscious subject are not implicitly rational; while in truth every such affection implies the unreflective operation of reason. The "tender charities of husband, son, and brother" take the form of immediate feeling, but they are possible only because they carry with them a rational end. The truth is, that the mere affections of a sensitive subject are not desires at all, in the sense in which we speak of the desire for wealth, or knowledge, or the good of others, but only become so when they enter into the self-determinant life of man; and then, when carried out into action, or willed, they are rational motives relative to rational ends. There is, therefore, no difficulty in understanding how a free being may determine himself by desire, for desire is just the manner in which the free subject does determine himself in any given case. When Kant speaks as if man, in seeking the satisfaction of desire, is necessarily violating the rational law of duty, he overlooks the fact, which on occasion he is constrained to admit, that a rational being never acts except under the idea of the good, and never ascribes to himself an action which he does not will. No doubt, in seeking the satisfaction of his desires, he may act contrary to reason, but he could neither act contrary to nor in accordance with reason were his effective desires not the expression of his will. The freedom of man is therefore no mere "postulate," but a truth of which the whole self-conscious life of man is the clearest evidence. To be a self and to be free are the same thing; for no being can be self-conscious without being beyond the influence of purely external causes.

Nor is the existence of God a "postulate." As we have seen, the system of nature is unintelligible

## 98 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

unless as the outward form of a perfect intelligence. For, nature exists only for us as intelligent beings, and our existence again is inconceivable apart from an ultimate principle from which our rational as well as our sensitive nature proceeds. Kant argues that the existence of God is merely a "postulate," which we are compelled to make because reason demands that the world should not by its very nature be incompatible with the union of virtue and happiness. But, such a "postulate" can have no validity, unless our experience is inexplicable on any other supposition; and if that is so, we have ample ground for claiming that the existence of the Infinite is a principle of knowledge. Thus the system of nature, the freedom of man and the existence of God are but different aspects of the same truth, the truth that we live in a rational universe. There is, therefore, no need to bring back, under the name of "faith," what is denied under the name of "knowledge," or to oppose theoretical reason and practical reason, assigning the "primacy" to the latter. What is called "faith" is really reason, which is not aware of itself as reason, just because it has unwittingly built up for itself the world of nature and the higher world of morality, art, and religion, and thus seems to find before it a creation foreign to itself. "Theoretical reason," again, is not a separate and independent faculty, but simply that aspect of the single self-conscious intelligence in which it contemplates its own unconscious work; while "practical reason" is the same intelligence, when it contemplates itself in the actual process of expressing itself in particular acts. To set up the one against the other, assigning a superiority to either, is to set up the intelligence against itself. What sort of theoretical reason would that be, which did not



## IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHY 99

express itself in an objective world, but remained for ever self-enclosed? and what sort of practical reason could there be, which did not comprehend the objective world, but ruled itself by fictions of its own creation? The former would have nothing real to know, and the latter nothing real to will. Reason is a seamless whole, and as such it must be conceived as knowing in its action and active in its knowledge.

From what has been said it follows that there is no need to seek for God afar off; He is "in our mouths and in our hearts." When, therefore, the religious consciousness lifts us above the divisions of our ordinary prosaic view of life, it does not transport us into a realm which is foreign to reason, but simply reveals to us the truth of which in our ordinary mood we are only vaguely conscious; the truth, that here and now we live in a spiritual realm, and may hold communion with the Eternal Spirit. Were it not so, religion would be impotent to elevate and idealize life. A God who is fabled to dwell in a region beyond the "flaming walls" of the universe, is not only impossible of demonstration, but would be for us nothing even if his existence could be demonstrated. The only God in whom we can believe is a God who constitutes the rational structure of nature, and is most clearly revealed to us in our own hearts and minds; a God whose infinite perfection our intelligence comprehends in principle, to whom our aspirations go out, who forms the ever-growing ideal which we can never completely realize, and "in whose will," as Dante says, "is our peace": *in la sua volontade è nostra pace.*

## LECTURE FIFTH

### PERSONAL IDEALISM AND THE NEW REALISM

IN our last lecture an attempt was made to show that the true elements contained in the Critical Philosophy of Kant can only be preserved, if that philosophy is developed into a Speculative or Constructive Idealism. The main distinction between these two modes of thought is that, while both maintain that the universe is rational and that reason is self-harmonious, the former denies that either of these propositions can be established on the basis of knowledge, while the latter contends that the opposition of the theoretical and the practical reason is fatal to both propositions. Hence, while the Critical Philosophy falls back upon certain "postulates" of the moral consciousness in support of "faith," Speculative Idealism refuses to accept the antithesis of faith and knowledge, theoretical and practical reason, maintaining that a faith which is not identical with reason, a theoretical reason which is not in harmony with practical reason, is beset by an inherent weakness, which is sure to betray itself under the most searching of all tests, the test of self-criticism. Under this test, as we contended, Kant's doctrine of a faith that from its very nature cannot be developed into knowledge

is seen to be fatal to all our higher interests; and we endeavoured, by working in the higher spirit of the Critical Philosophy, to show that those interests are vouched for by a rational interpretation of our experience as a whole. The system of nature, as we held, is no limit to human freedom or to the perfection of God, since it has no independent reality of its own, but is simply a certain aspect of reality as a whole—that aspect in which, for the limited purpose of the special sciences, the external world is viewed *as if* it were complete in itself. When this artificial limitation of reality to a collection of objects, all of which are reciprocally dependent, is taken at its proper value, we see that there is nothing in the nature of the sciences to prevent us from affirming the freedom of man and the absolute-ness of God, and basing both upon the character of our experience in its completeness. The form of Idealism thus outlined attempts to combine the truth of Materialism and Spiritualism in a theory which affirms that the universe is an intelligible whole, and that as such it implies as its correlate an Infinite Intelligence. Within this whole, and expressive of this Intelligence, is contained every form of existence, including that of man. But man, as it is further held, not only falls into his place in the whole, but within him and coming to consciousness in him operates the same identical principle as that which operates in the whole and characterizes the Infinite Intelligence. And it is also maintained that, on any other supposition, freedom in any rational sense is impossible.

Partly through the influence of Lotze, and partly from the surviving influence of Empiricism, a number of writers, English and American, have preferred

## 102 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

various compromises to the thorough-going Idealism thus outlined. The doctrine which found most favour for many years, after the inadequacy of the older Empiricism, as represented by James Mill and John Stuart Mill, was perceived, was that of the late Herbert Spencer, who sought to reach beyond the opposition of Materialism and Subjective Idealism by maintaining that both are true phenomenally, while Reality in its ultimate nature differs from both, though from the necessary limitations of our thought it can never be an object of knowledge. This unknown and even unknowable Reality must be presupposed as the ultimate basis of both science and religion. The history of religion, as he thinks, has consisted in an ever clearer recognition of the impossibility on our part of a definite comprehension of the Power hidden behind the veil of the phenomenal; so that at last it is openly confessed that "to think that God is, *as we can think Him to be*, is blasphemy." Nor is science any more successful than religion in enabling us to comprehend the Absolute. Such conceptions as time and space, motion and force, consciousness and personality, break down in contradiction the moment we attempt to transfer them to the Absolute; the reason being, as Hamilton and Mansel have shown, that from the very nature of our knowledge we can only comprehend the finite and relative.

It was not to be expected that this attempt to show that the whole of our experience is fundamentally discrepant could give permanent satisfaction; and I think one may safely say that the only attack upon Speculative Idealism which is at present worthy of consideration comes from those who call themselves Personal Idealists, and from those who represent the

New Realism. While they are both agreed in their antagonism to Speculative Idealism, as they understand it, they are equally opposed to each other. I think it will be possible to show that neither of them can be regarded as a self-consistent and adequate explanation of the world in which we live, of our own nature, or of the ultimate principle of the universe.

Personal Idealism contends that it is impossible to preserve the freedom of man and the existence of God in a theory which abolishes individuality and leaves room for no reality but the Absolute. It may be regarded as proved that what are commonly called "things" have no independent existence, but exist only for mind. This being admitted, it follows that there exist souls, spirits, or selves, which know or experience things. Such beings are in some sense *persons*. Now, a person is, in the first place, a thinking, as distinguished from a merely feeling consciousness; secondly, he is in some degree permanent, or brings different experiences into relation with one another; thirdly, he distinguishes himself from the objects of his thought, though these have no existence except in his or some other consciousness; fourthly, among the objects are other selves, which are known as beings, that, like himself, exist for themselves; and lastly, he is not only a thinking and feeling, but a willing consciousness. To sum up, "a person is a conscious, permanent, self-distinguishing, individual, active being." These essential characteristics of personality do not seem to be found in any form of consciousness below the human, nor are they found in their perfection in the most developed human consciousness; and, indeed, so far as our knowledge goes, they are found only in God. The world must

## 104 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

exist in a mind; and as it existed before the origin of any human mind, we must hold the existence of a Universal Thinker, to whom must be attributed in perfection all those characteristics which are implied by Personality, and which yet no human person ever completely realizes. It may be concluded, then, that God "is a being who thinks, who persists throughout his successive experiences, who knows those past experiences as well as the present, who distinguishes Himself from the objects of His thought, who in particular distinguishes Himself from all other consciousnesses, and, finally, who wills, and wills in accordance with the conception of an ideal end or good." If it is asked *what* God wills, it may be answered, that He must at least will everything that is not willed by some lesser will; in other words, He must will the object of His own thought, *i.e.* the world. To this view it may be objected: (1) that, just as the human self knows itself only by the same act in which it knows the not-self; so the world is as necessary to God as God is to the world; (2) that the Absolute must be both subject and object; and (3) that *will* cannot be attributed to God. The answer to these objections is: (1) that, while the world must be an object for God, it does not follow that it is anything but His experiences, and these experiences must be conceived as willed, no less than thought; (2) that, while subject and object are inseparable, it does not follow that they are indistinguishable; and (3) that, while there is much in our experience of volition which belongs to our limitations, yet "our volition (as we know it) is the only experience which enables us to give concrete embodiment to the purely *a priori* conception of Causality, which includes both final cause

and efficient cause." And "even apart from this argument from Causality, the mere fact that mind, as we know it, is always will as well as thought, would be a sufficient ground for inferring by analogy that, if God be the supreme source of being or Mind, He too must be Will no less than Thought."

The general conclusion is, that "all reality lies in souls and their experiences." What, then, is the relation between these souls or spirits? God, as omniscient and eternal, must be regarded as "causing those experiences of the other souls of which their own wills are not the cause, and (since no human will is ever the *whole* cause of anything) as co-operating in some sense with whatever causality is exercised by human wills." Rejecting "the hypothesis of many independent, underived intelligences, co-eternal and uncreated," we must hold that "the human mind, like all minds, is derived from the one supreme Mind." Nevertheless, we must maintain "the separateness and distinctness of the individual self-consciousness from God when once in existence and so long as it exists." The fallacy of Monism is "the assumption that what constitutes existence for others is the same as what constitutes existence for self. A *thing* is as it is known: its *esse* is to be known: what it is for the experience of spirits, is its whole reality: it is that and nothing more. But the *esse* of a person is to know himself, to be for himself, to feel and think for himself, to act on his own knowledge, and to know that he acts. In dealing with persons, therefore, there is an unfathomable gulf between knowledge and reality. What a person is for himself is entirely unaffected by what he is for any other. . . . The essence of a person is not

## 106 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

what he is for another, but what he is for himself. . . . All the fallacies of our anti-individualist thinkers come from talking as though the essence of a person lay in what can be known about him, and not in his own knowledge, his own experience of himself." And "God must know the self as a self which has a consciousness, an experience, a will which is its own—that is, as a being which is not identical with the knowledge that He has of it." No doubt God "must have an infinitely deeper and completer knowledge of every one of us than any one has of another." "God's thought can as little be exactly what our thought is as our joys and sorrows can be exactly what His are." "God must, it would seem, know other selves by the analogy of what He is Himself. . . . His knowledge of other selves may be perfect knowledge without his ever being or becoming the selves which He knows." Is God, then, finite? Well, "everything that is real is in that sense finite. God is certainly limited by all other beings in the Universe, that is to say, by other selves, in so far as He is not those selves. He is not limited . . . by anything which does not ultimately proceed from his own Nature or Will or Power. That power is doubtless limited, and in the frank recognition of this limitation of power lies the only solution of the problem of Evil which does not either destroy the goodness of God or destroy moral distinctions altogether. He is limited by His own eternal . . . nature—a nature which wills eternally the best which that nature has in it to create. . . . The truth of the world is then neither *Monism*, in the pantheizing sense of the word, nor Pluralism: the world is neither a single Being, nor many co-ordinate and independent Beings, but a One Mind who gives

rise to many." The Reality is "a community of Persons."<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine which has just been summarized obviously owes its motive power mainly to the desire to preserve the independent personality of man. So strong is this desire that its exponents, or at least some of its exponents, are willing to fall back upon the idea of a finite God, though an attempt is made to show that the finitude ascribed to God is in harmony with the religious consciousness. The philosophical basis of the doctrine is the familiar theory, that all reality may be resolved into the experiences of conscious beings, these experiences being conceived as the states of separate individuals. Whatever exists is in some sense conscious, as Leibnitz long ago maintained,—though there are many degrees of consciousness, and it is even admitted that self-conscious personality is not found in any being lower than man, nor in its perfection even in the most developed human consciousness, but only in God.

Now, though this doctrine calls itself Idealism, it is not identical with what I have called Speculative Idealism: on the contrary, it is in one sense the exact opposite. Personal Idealism is in its fundamental principle akin to the Subjective Idealism of Berkeley and Leibnitz; while Speculative Idealism is based upon the principle that the universe is a rational system, which cannot be resolved into a mere assemblage of separate individuals. The former

<sup>1</sup>The statement of Personal Idealism given above is based upon the article on "Personality, Human and Divine" contributed to "Personal Idealism" by Mr. Hastings Rashdall, whose theological views, in the absence of any single authoritative exposition, I have ventured to take as representative.

## 108 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

maintains that nothing is real but what exists in the form of ideas in this or that individual, while the latter claims that the whole conception of individuals as confined to their own subjective states is a fiction. That Personal Idealism is essentially self-contradictory does not seem to me doubtful ; nor do I think that there is any great difficulty in meeting the objections raised by it to Speculative Idealism, which it identifies (as I think wrongly) with Absolutism.

Let us put ourselves for a moment at the point of view of the Personal Idealist. All that I or any other being directly apprehends consists, as we must suppose, of ideas in my mind—ideas which, as unique and peculiar, cannot be present in any other mind, not even the mind of God, in the sense in which they are present to me. Now, if we are to take this doctrine strictly, as we have a right to do with any philosophical theory, is it not evident that by no possible process can any of us ever break through the charmed circle of his own separate individuality ? What, then, can be meant by other objects or individuals, or by God ? My knowledge of them must consist in the ideas which arise in me. Nor can it even be said that these ideas in some way correspond to objects lying beyond my mind, for Personal Idealism does not admit the existence of any objects other than ideas. No doubt it assumes other minds with their special objects, but it does not admit the existence of any objects that are not ideas in the mind of some individual. Now, if each individual is confined to his own ideas, by what strange process is he led to imagine that there are other individuals besides himself ? Is it not obvious that such a notion would never dawn upon him at all ? But, supposing that it did occur to him, how

would he verify the truth of his hypothesis? His idea of another mind is for him merely his own idea; and, as he cannot possibly compare his idea with the reality, he can never obtain any knowledge of another mind except by a miracle. In other words, the existence of anyone but oneself is, on the theory of Subjective Idealism, a perfectly gratuitous assumption. One defence of the personal idealist is to distinguish between an idea and its content. Though every idea, it is said, is unique and exists only as a state of this or that individual consciousness, that in no way militates against an identity of content in the ideas of different individuals. But the distinction between idea and content, granting its validity, is of no avail in a defence of Subjective Idealism, and that for the simple reason, that an individual who is confined to his own ideas, having no knowledge of the ideas of any other individual, cannot possibly tell anything about the content of those ideas, and therefore cannot know whether they are identical with his own or not. Where nothing is known, there is no distinction of one thing from another. The individual, then, as Subjective Idealism must in consistency maintain, knows only his own ideas. But that is really the same as saying that he does not know them *as* his own ideas. For the consciousness of oneself is essentially relative to the consciousness of other selves. Hence the hermetically-sealed individuals of Personal Idealism can have no consciousness of themselves any more than of other selves. For the same reason they can have no consciousness of God. Not only, therefore, is the consistent subjective idealist deprived of all knowledge of others, but he cannot account either for his knowledge of himself or for his knowledge of God. The

## 110 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

logical result of the doctrine is, therefore, to destroy the meaning of the contention that all direct knowledge is of one's own ideas. If knowledge were really what it is declared to be, the personal idealist would never have had any problem to solve; for, confined absolutely to his own subjective states, no hint of a foreign reality would ever have arisen to disturb his self-centred isolation.

These simple considerations seem to me to dispose of the claims of Personal Idealism to be a true interpretation of our experience; but perhaps a few words on the religious aspect of the doctrine may not be out of place. God is defined as a person, *i.e.* "a conscious, permanent, self-distinguishing, individual, active being"; in other words, He has successive ideas or experiences, maintains his self-identity in them, knows his past and present experiences, distinguishes Himself from all other consciousnesses, and wills an ideal end or good. God, however, as it is admitted, is the originator of the human and all other minds, though He is only the cause of those experiences which are not willed by other causes. He knows that self-conscious persons exist, but His knowledge does not affect their independent existence. He knows other selves just as we do, namely, "by analogy of what He is Himself." And it is admitted that He is limited in power, though He always wills the best.

The self-contradictory character of this doctrine lies on the very surface of it. To begin with, it assumes that God, like other forms of being, is a separate individual, limited to His own experiences, and incapable of exercising any influence upon other self-involved individuals. The same objection therefore applies here, as we have already seen to beset the general theory of Personal Idealism, namely, that, confined within His

own individual mind, so far from being omniscient, God cannot have any knowledge whatever, either of other beings or of Himself. Again, it is affirmed that God wills those experiences of other minds which are not willed by themselves. But, if God is limited to His own ideas, how can He will anything but those ideas? Apparently, the only reason for attributing certain experiences of other beings to God is that they are not willed by these beings themselves; which is very much like Spencer's reason for giving to the Unknowable the name of God, namely, that he did not see what else it could be. Is it really necessary to point out that, as all experiences of individuals, whether willed or not, belong solely (according to subjective idealism) to the individuals themselves, those experiences cannot without contradiction be ascribed to God by thinkers whose fundamental principle it is that nothing exists except what is experienced by individuals? What, then, can possibly be meant by speaking of God as willing the "world"? The "world," as we are told, is admittedly "the object of God's thought," *i.e.* it consists of His individual states of consciousness or experiences. To will these, however, is merely to will certain experiences of His own, and such experiences must be entirely distinct from the "world" itself, *i.e.* from the experiences of other beings. Open as the personal idealist is to this objection, it is not surprising that he should be forced to admit that God is finite in power, though he still clings to the notion that He is infinite in knowledge. We have already seen that God cannot be shown by Subjective Idealism to be omniscient, for the simple reason that He cannot be shown to have any knowledge whatever; and it is equally obvious that He cannot be omnipotent, because He can have no power whatever. We are told that He brings other

## 112 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

individuals into existence, though, when they come into existence, He no longer influences them. Now, on the theory of Subjective Idealism, nothing exists except minds and their experiences. The creation of finite minds must therefore mean the production of these minds, together with their experiences ; and if so, the experiences also must be referred to God, since they have no existence apart from the minds to which they belong. But this is precisely what the bold assertion of God's limited power was meant to avoid ; and hence the self-contradictory doctrine of an omniscient being, who yet is limited in power, involves the further self-contradiction of a being who originates minds which are completely independent of their originator. It is hardly necessary to add that the conception of a finite God cannot possibly be a final explanation of anything, since it is perfectly compatible with any number of finite Beings higher than itself ; and that it cannot satisfy the religious consciousness, which demands, not an *Être Suprême*, but a Spirit with whom we may come into direct contact, and find support in our lives.

In what has been said, it must not be supposed that the object has been to discredit the main thesis of Personal Idealism, that man must be conceived as a person, and that only in God is personality in its highest form realized : what I have attempted to show is that personality in any proper sense cannot be identified with abstract individuality, or defended by the method of subjective idealism. The only basis of personality is that which takes proper account of the inseparable connection of all forms of existence in the whole, while maintaining that the consciousness of this inseparable connection and of the unity of all forms of existence in the whole is grasped by man

in virtue of his participation in the reason which constitutes the true nature of the whole. Personality, whether in man or God, therefore presupposes the total manifestation of a single self-determining principle. The only defensible conception of God is that which sees in Him the self-manifestation and self-knowledge of absolute reason,—a self-manifestation and self-knowledge which are unintelligible on any theory that divides up the universe into a number of self-enclosed individuals. It is through the consciousness of what is not oneself that the consciousness of self is possible at all, and the limitation of a finite being exactly corresponds to the defect in its relations, in the way of knowledge, feeling, and will, to the totality of other beings and to the whole. Complete personality will therefore consist, not in a perfect image of all things, but in a perfect comprehension of, and manifestation in, all things ; in other words, God can be shown to be a person only if it is established that He is not shut up within Himself, but completely expresses Himself in the universe, and in that expression reaches perfect self-comprehension.

The fundamental defect in Personal Idealism, which I have endeavoured to point out, has given occasion for a theory which is vitiated by the opposite defect. When reality is reduced to states of consciousness in this or that individual, it is naturally pointed out that such a doctrine is based upon an arbitrary abstraction, which sets at defiance the actual nature of our experience. This is the attitude of the exponents of the New Realism. The objects of our knowledge, as they contend, cannot be identified with ideas in the individual mind, even if those ideas are regarded as sensations reduced to order and coherence by conceptions. Nor can the time-honoured distinction of

## 114 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

primary and secondary qualities be accepted, at least if the former are attributed to things, while the latter are regarded as merely sensations with nothing objective corresponding to them. There is in all cases a sharp distinction between consciousness and its objects. My consciousness of an external object, such as a tree, cannot be identified with the existence of that object: the object exists whether I am conscious of it or not. And the same thing applies to what occurs in my organism. My feeling of hunger is one thing, the state of being hungry is another and a totally different thing. Similarly, my thought that  $2 + 2 = 4$  is not the same thing as the truth that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Thus, no matter whether I have a perception, feeling, or conception, there is always a distinction between my idea and the object of which it is the idea. It is a mere confusion of thought, it is said, first to identify real objects with subjective states of consciousness, as Idealism does, and then to infer that there is no real world other than those states. Nor does it make any essential difference to say that reality is not given in immediate perception, but is the product of the conceptual activity of thought; for this modification of the doctrine does not get rid of the fundamental defect, that the objective world is regarded as having no existence apart from the individual mind which constructs or constitutes it. Is it not perfectly plain, argues the realist, that every idea has a character of its own which distinguishes it from its object? Thus, space as an object is essentially extension or outwardness-of-parts; but my idea of space has no extension or outwardness-of-parts. Weight as an object implies the attraction of extended particles, whereas it is absurd to speak of my consciousness of weight as made up of extended particles attracting each other in proportion to their mass and

inversely as the square of the distance. Green is a colour; but my idea of green is not itself green. Pleasure is always pleasant, but not so my idea of pleasure. How, then, can anyone doubt that there is "a reality quite distinct from the subjective world of our direct experience?" Idealism is therefore an utterly untenable theory of existence.

Now, it is obvious, from the whole character of the attack, that what the New Realism means by Idealism is the doctrine which we have discussed under the name of Personal Idealism, or at least is some form of Subjective Idealism kindred in nature to it. The gist of the whole argument is, that reality cannot be resolved into states of consciousness, or ideas which arise in the mind of this or that individual. In this contention the New Realism is not only in harmony with common sense, but it may count upon the support of Speculative Idealism, which differs from Subjective Idealism in almost everything but name. Reality is certainly not reducible to ideas of the individual mind; so far we must agree with the realist. Does it follow, as he contends, that there is an absolute distinction between ideas and objects?

Let us begin with the case of an external object, say a tree. The position of the realist is that my idea of the tree is one thing, and the existing tree is another and a different thing. The tree does not cease to exist when I lose consciousness of it, or come into existence when I again have an idea of it. And the same thing is true of all other conscious subjects, human or divine: nothing can obliterate the fundamental distinction between the idea of a thing and the existence of that thing.

Now, there is of course no possible doubt that my consciousness of a tree or any other external

## 116 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

object does not bring it into existence. But the real question is, not whether the tree "exists," but what is meant by its "existence." To answer this question we must ask what is involved in our knowledge of the tree; for the only tree of which we can say anything is one that falls within our knowledge. It is said that the idea of the tree is independent of the tree as it exists. If this statement is taken seriously, it must mean that my "idea" is a certain fact, arising within my mind, and arising without in any way coming into contact with the existing tree. What is the character of this "idea"? As it is purely mental, it must, as I suppose, be held to be inextended and immaterial, whereas the tree is extended and material. But, even so, if I have a knowledge of the tree, I must obtain that knowledge in some way through my "ideas." As these are excluded from the tree, they must in some sense be images or representations of the tree, not the tree itself. Thus I have no direct knowledge of the tree at all. But if not, how can I know that my image or idea of the tree is a correct representation of it? nay, how do I know that there is any tree? If I am limited to my ideas, how shall I get beyond them? Evidently the realist is after all only a less logical subjective idealist. And the reason why he lies open to the same criticism as the subjective idealist is, that like him he has set up the pure fiction of a mind which *possesses* ideas, just as a man may possess a piece of property, these ideas being figured after the pattern of images reflected in a mirror. But there are no such "ideas." When I perceive a tree, my perception is no image in my mind, while the tree is beyond my mind, but I actually perceive a real object, which I name a tree.

It may be objected that the tree exists when I do not perceive it, and therefore is independent of my perception of it. But "exists" in what sense? It is natural to suppose that the tree is a single individual thing, which would exist and be what it is even if all other things were annihilated. But it requires very little reflection to see that a tree of this character is a pure fiction. Every tree has begun to be, and none has originated from itself. Nor is there any tree which will exist for ever, or which could exist at all but for the totality of forces which operate in the universe. If we trace our tree back to its conditions, we are led to see that its existence is involved in the existence of the whole universe, and that unless the whole universe conspired to support it, it would shrivel into nothingness. When, therefore, we speak of the existence of the tree, we are tacitly affirming the existence of the whole universe. The subjective idealist would have us believe that the universe means for us the ideas which arise in our individual minds. Against this doctrine the realist rightly protests, but unfortunately he bases his protest on wrong grounds. He claims that ideas in the individual mind are incommensurable with objects beyond the individual mind; overlooking the fact that, in admitting the existence of purely subjective ideas, he is tacitly affirming that objects beyond the mind are unknowable. In point of fact there are no "ideas" such as he assumes. What, then, gives plausibility to his contention that there is a distinction between the ideas of this or that man and the objects of which they are ideas? The existence of an object is made possible only by the whole universe of which it is but a relatively insignificant aspect. To identify the object with the perception of it on the part of

## 118 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

this or that individual would therefore be equivalent to saying that the transient activity of a particular individual was identical with the total activity of the universe. But, though it is not dependent for its existence upon the perception of the individual, the object would not be what it is were it not capable of being presented to the individual. In other words, its existence is bound up with its possible relation to the perceiving subject. For the character of his perceptions, like the properties of the object, is determined by the total nature of the universe; and were it not so, the object would be no object for him. And as the relations of the object to his perceptions are constant and invariable, he rightly concludes, when his perceptions are the same, that the object is the same. Thus his knowledge of the existence of the object is the comprehension on his part of the immutability of the object under the same conditions. Its "existence" consists in its permanence under the same conditions, and among those conditions the most significant for the perceiving subject is identity in his successive perceptions.

From what has been said the inadequacy of the realistic account of reality is manifest. Rightly insisting that the world cannot be reduced to ideas in the individual mind, it plays into the hands of the enemy by granting to him that our *knowledge* of things may be resolved into such ideas. Speculative Idealism denies this assumption, maintaining that the conditions of the existence of anything whatever are the same as the conditions of knowledge: that just as no object can exist except in so far as its existence is guaranteed by the whole universe, so no knowledge is possible except in so far as it is made possible by the organic unity of nature and mind. It is true

that this organic unity is never completely known by us; but that in no way invalidates the principle, that it is just in so far as the organic unity of all the phases of our experience *is* known, that we comprehend the real nature of the world and of ourselves. Thus we come back to the conclusion at which we had previously arrived, that every step in the development of our experience is a farther revelation of the self-determinant Spirit which enfolds all modes of existence from the lowest to the highest.

If I have succeeded in making plain the form of Idealism which seems to me defensible, there can be no great difficulty in disposing of the other instances given by the realist in support of his contention that ideas and objects have an existence quite independent of each other. That this is not true in the case of the perception of external objects we have seen; for these would not be what they are, were they not related to perception in certain fixed and unchanging ways. The realist, however, also contends that even in the case of what is usually regarded as a purely subjective affection, there is a distinction between the subjective idea and the object of which it is an idea. Thus, my feeling of hunger is an idea in my mind, whereas the hunger is an objective state of my organism.

Now, there can be no difficulty in dealing with such an instance as this. My feeling of hunger, it is said, is distinct from the actual condition of hunger; in other words, the feeling is a mode of my individual consciousness, the hunger is not. One reason given for this contention is, that the existence of the hunger in me may be known by others while no one but myself can experience the feeling. And of course this is perfectly true. But the question is, whether

## 120 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the feeling of hunger and the actual hunger are independent in the sense claimed by the realist. If the feeling is separable from the actual state, it must have a subjective object distinct from that which it represents; otherwise it would not be the feeling of hunger. How, then, can the transition be made from this internal object to the external state? It must be because the content of the feeling stands for, or represents, the external state. But if the individual is thus limited to his feeling, how does he *know* that there is any external state corresponding to it? Is it not plain that, by interposing an image between the subject and the supposed object, the avenue outwards is blocked? Thus, once more, we see that realism is merely an arrested solipsism.

What, then, in the present instance misleads the realist? Why does his assertion of the distinction between the feeling of hunger and the actual state of hunger sound so reasonable? The answer is not far to seek. Hunger as an actual condition of the organism cannot be identified with the feeling of hunger, because by the former is meant a certain effect conditioned by non-sensitive processes, while by the latter is meant the response of the organism so far as it is sensitive. To identify the one with the other is manifestly impossible. But while this is true, it must be added that the feeling of hunger as such gives no knowledge of hunger as a state of the organism. The knowledge of hunger consists in the interpretation of the feeling by reference to all that is known of the organism. Now, such knowledge implies a very considerable advance in the comprehension of the real world, since it means that the real world is grasped, not only as a physical system, but as a system comprehending within it

organized as well as unorganized beings. To reduce the knowledge of hunger to the passing state of the individual would therefore be even more absurd than to explain the existence of such an external object as a tree by immediate sensation; for, as that knowledge implies the comprehension of organic as well as inorganic things, it marks a further stage in the comprehension of the universe as a whole. Hunger cannot be reduced to the feeling of hunger, because it is the state of a living being, which could not exist were not the world not only a system, but a system making possible the existence of living beings, and therefore of the feeling of this particular living being, as occurring under these and no other conditions. The reality of hunger as a fact therefore means the reality of a universe containing organized beings which respond to stimuli in certain fixed ways; and it is the knowledge of this fact which guarantees for us the reality of hunger as something that is not made by our feeling, but of which our feeling is the sign. If therefore we eliminate all that is implied in such knowledge, we destroy at the same time the basis upon which our judgment of hunger, as an object, rests; for no feeling, taken in its abstraction, is the guarantee of anything.

The remaining case of arithmetical or geometrical judgments is easily disposed of. The realist contends that the truth of two and two making four is distinct from my consciousness of it. So far as this means that the truth in this case is not merely an idea in my head, he is undoubtedly right. Two and two are four, whether I think so or not. But on what ground do we base this objective truth? In the first place, we have to observe that such judgments take us beyond our immediate sensible experiences.

## 122 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Two and two are not *things* that we can perceive with our eyes, or touch with our fingers: they are conceptions which we grasp with our intellect. Now it is the character of every conception that it is not a mere individual, but is universal in the sense that it is potentially infinite, *i.e.* is applicable to all possible instances. When I think of two, I mean, as Aristotle long ago pointed out,<sup>1</sup> not *this* two, but every possible two; and when I judge that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , I mean that every possible two added to other two makes four. On the other hand, this particular truth is not one which is true in its isolation. It implies an arithmetical system apart from which it would not be true. The basis of that system is the absolute identity of every unit in the system of units, the equality of any sum of units with the synthesis of all the units taken individually. Not only, therefore, does the judgment,  $2 + 2 = 4$ , imply that any possible two added to any other possible two is four, but that any possible number of units added to any other possible number is equal to any possible number of units taken individually. The truth, then, of any sum of numbers, and indeed of the whole of the arithmetical and algebraic operations, presupposes the unchangeable identity of units in a system of units; and this, again, presupposes that every intelligent subject who is capable of comprehending what is meant by a unit must agree in accepting the arithmetical judgments which express what is implied in a system of units. The conception of a unit, though it is not the express comprehension of an arithmetical system, really presupposes it; so that, if the system is denied, the unit ceases to have any meaning. It is thus obvious that the truth of

<sup>1</sup> *Posterior Analytics*, 71 a, 30 ff.

the simplest arithmetical judgment implies an arithmetical system capable of being grasped by every rational being. Now, when it is recognized that there is a fixed system of units, and a corresponding identity in the thought of every rational being, it would plainly be absurd to affirm that the truth of an arithmetical judgment is dependent upon its acceptance or rejection by this or that individual. The judgment is one that must be accepted by every thinking being who understands what it means, and that because it is the expression of an element in a self-consistent whole, the denial of which would make every arithmetical judgment unmeaning. The individual, in making a particular arithmetical judgment, tacitly accepts the whole system of such judgments; and unless he does so, he virtually falls into the contradiction of at once affirming and denying the truth of the particular judgment which he makes.

The realist, however, affirms more than this: he maintains that the truth of our arithmetical judgments is one thing, and our arithmetical judgments another thing. Now, this can only mean that when I make a particular arithmetical judgment, I have before my mind an idea of, say, two units, together with the idea that they are to be added to other two units, and that I then pass to another idea, viz. the judgment,  $2 + 2 = 4$ . The realist is evidently under the illusion that I can frame an *image* of two groups of units which are to be combined, and that my mind may then make the transition to a more complex image, in which the two groups are presented as united in a larger group. But this view is based upon the untenable assumption that units are images. No doubt there are images in many cases, but these are simply signs of what is not, and cannot be,

## 124 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

imaged, namely, abstract units, grasped by thought as universals or infinite possibilities. Now, since the true units cannot be imaged at all, there are no ideas of units such as the realist supposes: in making the judgment, the mind is stating what holds good for every mind and holds good under all possible conditions. If the realist were right in supposing that "ideas," in the sense of "images," were the sole object with which the mind operates, it is easy to show that no true judgment could possibly be made. An image is necessarily particular and transitory, and therefore cannot have a universal application. But, when we judge that two and two are four, we do not mean that the images of two and two and the image of four are the same image (which is obviously untrue): what our judgment means is, that these or any other two units added to other two are four; and this judgment presupposes the comprehension by thought of an absolute or unchangeable arithmetical system.

Perhaps it may be objected, that while this view explains the universality of arithmetical judgments, it does not show that this system is applicable to the actual world. For, it may be said, the whole arithmetical system, consistent as it is in itself, may merely have the consistency of an arbitrary fiction. In nature, as Mill argued, there are no objects corresponding to the units of arithmetic; and hence, even if that system is admitted by every rational being who admits the reality of the unit, this only proves that a self-consistent hypothesis is not self-contradictory: it does not show that arithmetical judgments are true of real objects.

Now, there is a certain amount of force in this objection, but I do not think that it casts any real doubt upon the objective truth of our mathematical

judgments. What these judgments affirm is that, in whatever other and more complex ways it may be determined, the world in its aspect as an external system has a fixed and unchangeable constitution. The world, in other words, is not *merely* an extended being, but it *is* extended; and were it not so, it could not be the rational organism which it can be shown to be. For, if it were not extended, not only could it not be numbered, but all motion and change must be denied, and with these all intellectual and moral process. What the mathematical sciences do is to state the unchangeable conditions involved in there being an extended universe; and though their judgments are inadequate when applied to the higher aspects of the universe, they never cease to be true of the universe in its aspect of an extended reality. The limitation of mathematical judgments to the outer manifestation of the spiritual universe therefore in no way casts doubt upon their objective truth. A world of pure externality is, no doubt, impossible; but a world without externality, and therefore without motion or change of any kind, is equally impossible. While it is right to protest against the part being taken for the whole, it must not be forgotten that without the parts there is no whole. This is the sense, as it seems to me, in which mathematics may rightly claim to formulate what is objectively true. The realist, on the other hand, affirms objective truth in a sense that I cannot but regard as indefensible and ultimately unthinkable. He virtually claims that objects, which exist independently of this or that rational subject, have characteristics that belong to them in themselves entirely apart from their relation to any rational subject. Now, if this contention were sound, there would be no basis for the claim to a real knowledge of

## 126 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the world, and no basis therefore for maintaining that the world is the outward form of a self-determinant reason. For, the ground upon which we legitimately claim to know the real world is, that it falls within the sphere of our consciousness ; and the ground upon which we affirm the reality of a self-determinant reason is, that no other hypothesis is compatible with the character of the world as known by us. Enough has been said on the former point, but it may be profitable to add a few words on the latter point.

What is claimed by the realist is that the mathematical determination of the world is an adequate characterization of the real world, which by its very nature is independent of all relation to conscious subjects. If this were true, we must suppose that the world is capable of existing, and would be what it is, even if the totality of living and rational beings were annihilated. Now, it is of course true that the world does not depend for its existence upon any finite rational being, and that we can imagine all these annihilated without contradiction. But the question is whether nature can exist by itself, on the assumption that it is defined simply as an extended being. In answer to this question we must begin by pointing out that we have no knowledge of nature as so defined. Our experience presents us with a nature which contains external things of a definite and specific character, and it is only by an effort of abstraction that we are able to strip this many-coloured world of its covering and reduce it to the bare skeleton with which mathematics operates. So far therefore as the world with which mathematics deals is concerned, it is not true that it has any independent reality ; in fact, it exists nowhere but in the minds of the individuals who make it an object of their thought. But, though

it thus originates in an act of abstraction, we cannot say that there is nothing in the world corresponding to the product of this act; on the contrary, this product is based upon the character of the world of experience. But while this is true, it is also true that the ultimate foundation for our mathematical judgments is the conviction that the world is intelligible, and therefore that what our intelligence demands must be; in other words, the constructions of the mathematician are true objectively only under the presupposition that the actual world involves a rational system. To assume, therefore, as the realist does, that the world as external exists, and has a definite nature, apart from a creative reason, is to assume that the world can exist even when it has been separated from the principle upon which its existence and definite nature are absolutely dependent. Even if we supposed it possible that there should exist a world which is unintelligible, at any rate it would be for us a "book with seven seals." The claim to true or objective mathematical judgments is therefore a claim to the comprehension of a world which constitutes an external system, but which is comprehensible at all only because that external system is the true, but incomplete, expression of a universe which is essentially spiritual. The realist takes the world as partially determined, and then, identifying it with this torso of itself, he claims the ultimate truth of the characteristics expressed in our mathematical judgments; not seeing that these are true only on presupposition that we live in an intelligible universe, and have in our intelligence the principle manifested in the universe.

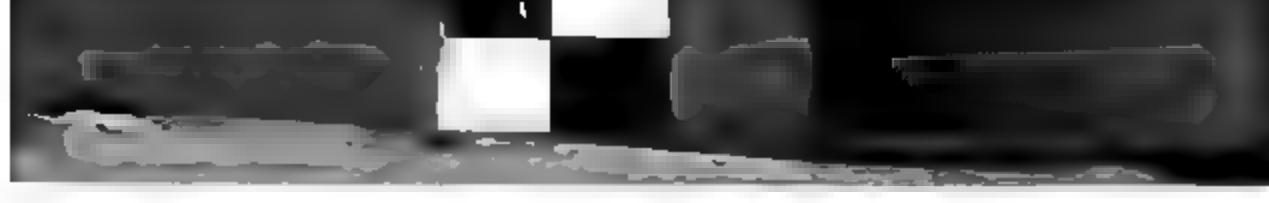
There is an objection to the view which I have tried to express which is almost sure to be made. If

## 128 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

external nature has no reality apart from a creative intelligence, how, it may be asked, are we to explain the fact that prior to the advent of life and intelligence upon the earth, there was, if we are to believe the majority of scientific men, nothing but inorganic nature?

An answer to this difficult problem can only be indicated. The changes which take place in the world imply the consciousness of time or succession ; without which, indeed, they are inconceivable. Nor is there any valid mode of escape from the difficulty now under consideration in a theory, such as that of Kant, which regards time as merely the form in which we are compelled to order our experiences, because of the finite and sensible character of our knowledge. The objection to this mode of explanation is, that, if pressed to its consequences, it converts the whole of our knowledge into an illusion. Yet there is an underlying truth in Kant's doctrine, which, when it is brought to light and thought out into perfect consistency, may at least help us to solve our problem. There is, as we have admitted, such a thing as succession, *i.e.* events do follow one another. This does not mean that we have experience of events merely as successive : what we actually experience is, that changes take place in the world as known to us, such that, when we compare one experience with another, we find that a new determination of things has taken the place of the old. And this again implies that the series of events of which we have experience is not a mere series, *i.e.* is not an absolute transition from one state to another, but is really a succession of what is not successive. The changes in the world, in other words, are not absolute transitions. There is no break in the continuity of the

world-process. It is the same world which persists through all the changes; and were it not so there would be no changes. If this is admitted, it is obvious that there can be no absolute origination or decease. To suppose that either is possible is to maintain that something may arise from nothing, or pass into nothing; a supposition which ultimately leads to the conclusion that the whole of reality, as it has come out of nothingness, so it may vanish away into nothingness and literally "leave not a rack behind." Granting, then, as I think we must, that the universe has not sprung out of nothing and cannot pass into nothing, we must regard the changes which go on in the world, not as the absolute origination or destruction of being, but as transformations of an imperishable reality. These transformations no doubt involve changes in the unchangeable, but not changes which can be regarded as creations or destructions. Nor have we any experience of such creations or destructions: what we experience are changes of form which leave the reality unchanged. What, then, is to be said of those great cosmic changes, which, if we are to believe our men of science, have resulted in the formation of our solar system? Whatever view we take of them, I think we shall agree that there has been no absolute origination, but only a transformation. Therefore, the appearance of life and consciousness upon the earth cannot have been their absolute origination; in other words, the primitive nebular matter must be conceived as involving, for one who grasped what it implied, all that comes out of it. But as knowledge is in us a process, in which we pass from one phase of reality to another, we naturally fix our attention upon that aspect of the universe in which it presents itself to us as a



## 130 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

series of events; and as we thus observe the series of events, without reflecting upon the permanence which is its correlate, we are wont to speak of a cause as an antecedent, an effect as a consequent. In reality, however, a cause is never an antecedent, but the totality of co-existent conditions, and the only ultimate or real cause is the whole universe. As the changes which occur are never originations, the emergence of life and consciousness on our earth is only the comprehension on the part of finite beings of the unchangeable principle of all reality, which has not itself originated. Since the universe as a whole cannot come into being, the process through which it passes is self-evolved, and therefore the events which, from the point of view of time, we distinguish as new states of the world, are but the expression of its self-activity. This conception of the universe as self-complete and self-evolving is, however, inconceivable on the supposition that any new mode of existence is an absolute origination; and therefore the rise of life in the organic world and of intelligence in man is but the gradual manifestation and comprehension on their part of the ultimate principle which gives meaning to all that is, and without which nothing that is could be.

At this point it may be argued that, if all that ever comes to be is already contained in the universe before it comes to be, a complete knowledge of the universe would show it to be absolutely changeless and immovable. That being so, must we not regard the temporal process as not a real process, but as merely our imperfect representation, in the form of process, of that which is devoid of all process? How, then, it may be demanded, can we escape from the conclusion that individuality and freedom are a mere

dream? Are we not forced to say with Spinoza that the only real being is God, and that all apparently real finite beings are but modes of his infinite attributes? In seeking to escape from Subjective Idealism have we not fallen into Absolutism of the most uncompromising kind?

Now, there is a specious way of escape from this difficulty, of which Speculative Idealism, as I understand it, cannot avail itself. The conception of an eternal or infinite self-evolving rational universe, it may be said, is merely an ideal, valuable as presenting us with the goal towards which all things are ever moving, but having no other validity or value. The ideal of knowledge is that of an organic whole in which every element is inseparable from every other, and the ideal of action is that of a universe in which every being, in completely realizing its own nature, fulfils its special function as a member of the whole. The value of this ideal in its two aspects is inestimable as the incentive and goal of all our efforts towards completeness of knowledge and of action; but it cannot be assumed to be already realized in God. What we mean by God, the Absolute, or whatever term we use, is merely our own ideal, projected as a reality, while in truth it has no existence beyond our own minds. It is, in Kant's terminology, a *regulative*, not a *constitutive*, Idea.

Now, it is not to be denied that this solution seems at first sight to provide a way of escape from some of the difficulties connected with the doctrine, that God is a real or objective existence. If God is but the ideal of unrealized possibilities, which we as men set before ourselves as the indefinable goal towards which we are ever moving,



## 132 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

we are not called upon to explain how there can be any process in that which is already perfect; nor does there seem to be any special difficulty in maintaining our own freedom and moral responsibility. We know that our knowledge grows from more to more, and we believe that moral progress is continually going on; and, certain of these two facts, we have, it may be said, all that is necessary for the conduct of our individual life and the progressive organization of society. Why, then, should we gratuitously puzzle ourselves with the self-contradictory doctrine of a universe in which all possibilities are already realized, while yet it is undergoing a process of development? Is it not far simpler to keep strictly to what we can prove from experience, viz. that the human race continually grows in knowledge and morality, leaving insoluble enigmas alone? Why can we not be contented to accept the conception of God as an ideal, without maintaining His objective existence?

What is here meant by an "ideal"? If I construct the fiction of a city in the heavens, inhabited by immortals of human shape, and with the limitations of ordinary humanity, it may be admitted that, though it does not rest upon any solid basis of fact, it yet has distinct value as a picture which helps to bring to light the great spiritual forces which give meaning to our own life. But, if the whole conception of life underlying my fiction is challenged: if it is maintained that I have not only constructed a mere fairy tale, but one which is in fundamental disharmony with the whole nature of man; is it not manifest that I must either show that the objection is baseless, or admit that I have constructed a fiction which cannot serve as an ideal because it is essentially

false to the nature of things? Now, it is the same with the ideal of God. If that ideal is to serve as the standard by which our lives may be regulated, it must be what our lives would be if all our possibilities were realized. An ideal cannot be purely negative: we must in some sense be able to comprehend what completed knowledge would be, or we cannot know that our knowledge is not complete. But there can be no meaning in calling knowledge incomplete, unless we are able to comprehend what the true nature of things is. Eliminate the relation of our ideas to reality, and the distinction between truth and falsehood disappears. Therefore, if there is no reality corresponding to our ideal, that ideal will not be an ideal of *knowledge*, but merely the fiction that beyond what we call knowledge there is a possible form of consciousness which, as we believe, would bring satisfaction to us. But, if that were really the case, our satisfaction would be placed, not in the realization of completed knowledge, but on the contrary in the effort to realize what from the nature of the case could not be realized. The ideal of completed knowledge, then, must be the ideal of the completed knowledge of reality or it is an empty fiction. It would thus seem that unless the ideal of knowledge is based upon the existence of a reality corresponding to it, that ideal becomes a mere illusion. · But a reality corresponding to the ideal can have no existence apart from a perfect intelligence, because, as we have seen above, a reality which falls beyond intelligence is unthinkable. Applying the same method to the question of the ideal of action, we find that we cannot escape from the conviction of an infinite Reason without destroying at once knowledge and morality. Thus we are thrown back



## 134 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

upon the problem of reconciling the objective existence of the Infinite with the process of the finite, and especially of our own life. Is any solution possible?

It is well to remind ourselves that, as self-conscious intelligences, we already in a sense possess a knowledge of the whole. Our life as individuals is no doubt subject to insuperable limitations, but these can be made an object of consciousness, and therefore we can in idea rise above them. The fact that we are able to reconstruct the history of our solar system, while as individuals our existence does not extend beyond a few decades, shows that, in the realm of the mind, time and space are not absolute limits, but limits that we transcend in every thought we have. There is therefore nothing in the conception of an Infinite Being which we need regard as unthinkable. Now, the limits of our individual life arise mainly from our ignorance or uncertainty of details. The large outlines of our life we know, though the exact result of every act we learn only from experience. Nevertheless, the result must in all cases be such as the whole nature of the universe demands. At first sight this may seem to bring us within the iron law of necessity; but, as we have already seen, the world is not a mechanical system, but a rational or spiritual organism, and therefore the influences which urge us to action do not operate irrespective of our intelligence and will. Progress in knowledge and morality can therefore only mean the progressive comprehension and realization on our part of what the true nature of things is, or, in theological language, it consists in communion with God. This participation in the nature of the Divine is certainly the coming to consciousness on our part of what we really are; or, otherwise expressed, it is the realiza-

tion of the unity of our spirit with the universal Spirit; a unity which is not created by our consciousness of it, but is based upon the absolute nature of things. Thus we may maintain, as I think, that our progress in knowledge and morality is nothing but the experience of what we really are.

The view which I am trying to express must not be confused with the absorption of all the finite in the abyss of an absolute Being. It abolishes no distinction: what it does is to maintain that every distinction, even the most minute, if only we could trace it out to its ultimate source, would be found to be inseparable from the whole spiritual reality, and even in its immediate form reveals, though in a vague and indefinite way, the principle of the whole. Hence, as we ascend in the scale of being there is an ever clearer manifestation and realization of the divine unity; and in man, of all the finite beings we know, that unity is most clearly manifested and most definitely apprehended. The whole movement of human history, in fact, is nothing but the increasing comprehension of what nature and man are, when brought into connection with the principle immanent in all things. If at first man seems to live in a world that is foreign to him, it yet is true that the whole development of civilization is the process by which the rationality of the universe is ever more clearly disclosed to him, as he obtains an ever fuller knowledge of the Spirit in whom he "lives and moves and has his being."



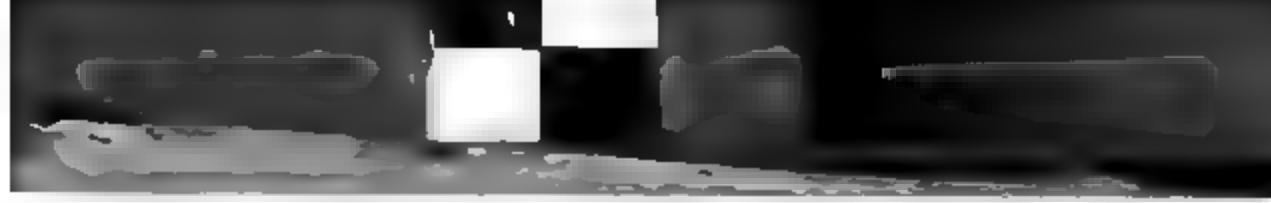
## LECTURE SIXTH

### THE INTERPRETATION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

WITH the last lecture we concluded the consideration of those views which recognize the importance of a connected system of ideas to the complete formulation of religion. The most satisfactory attempt to construct such a system, as we contended, is that which may be called Speculative or Constructive Idealism, which seeks to unite the elements of truth contained in the opposite doctrines of Personal Idealism and the New Realism, while avoiding the elements of error with which they are infected.<sup>1</sup> Personal Idealism accentuates the important truth that the higher interests of man can only be defended by the recognition of his freedom and personality; but it falls into the mistake of affirming the separation of the individual in his existence from all other individuals, and even from God, and thus makes any real knowledge on his part impossible; while at the same time, in maintaining the isolation of God from all other beings, it is forced to deny His infinity. <sup>2</sup>The New Realism rightly denies that reality can be reduced to individual experiences, but it errs in affirming the separate and independent existence of individual objects, and thus lies open to the objection that, as knowledge is supposed to consist

in subjective states of consciousness, we can have no real knowledge of anything, not even of ourselves. Speculative Idealism, endeavouring to avoid these opposite pitfalls, claims that the personality of man presupposes the process by which the subject knows and realizes himself, not in separation from the world and God, but in the comprehension of both as inseparably bound up with the consciousness of himself. Man is capable of overcoming the world, because in it he discerns the operation of the principle of reason which constitutes his own true self, and because in realizing that self he is in harmony with the universal reason; he is capable of union with God, because there is no aspect of the universe which is not the more or less explicit expression of the Divine Reason.

Now, it was pointed out in our opening lecture, that besides the doctrines which seek to build up a system of ideas, there is another view, which attaches supreme importance to the religious consciousness of the individual, and either minimizes the value of all doctrinal systems, or even denies that any such system can be constructed at all. Various modifications of this general theory have found favour in our own day; the main line of cleavage being between that which treats the religious consciousness as an object of psychological consideration, to be studied in the same way as any other phenomenon, and that which starts from the basis of historical Christianity. As a representative of the former, I propose to consider the view advanced by Mr. William James in his recent brilliant work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; and of the latter, the principle underlying Professor Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, familiar to English-speaking readers under the title, *What is Christianity?*



## 138 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Whatever conclusion we may reach in regard to the value of Professor James' philosophy, or want of philosophy, there can be no doubt as to the great debt which we owe him for his zeal in the collection and interpretation of psychological material, and for the marvellous skill and sympathy with which he has presented the most divergent types of religious experience. We find in his book a graphic picture of the inner consciousness of "all sorts and conditions of men," including Christian scientists, rationalists, mystics, and others; and it is impossible to avoid being touched, and not unfrequently painfully touched, by the pungent records of religious experience which he has brought together. Whether injustice is not done to religion by the selection of confessions, which, as our author admits, are saturated with sentiment, we shall afterwards consider; meantime, it will help us to a final estimate of the value of his work if we first consider the general method which it at once presupposes and illustrates. That method is one which is now familiar to us all, under the name of Pragmatism.

If it has not been directly affected by the Critical Philosophy, Pragmatism at least exhibits a certain analogy to one phase of it—that in which supreme importance is attached to the practical as distinguished from the theoretical reason. The abrupt contrast of these two forms of consciousness in Kant naturally led to divergent views in his successors. One class of thinkers, representing what has been called "naturalism," cut the knot by denying *in toto* that we can determine anything in regard to the region lying beyond the sphere of sensible experience. At the same time the influence of Kant upon them is so far evident that they admit the existence of a reality

lying beyond experience, while they claim that of it we can say nothing except that it is. This is the attitude of thinkers like Huxley and Tyndall, who found a philosophic exponent in the late Herbert Spencer. For all thinkers of this school the sole knowable forms of being are those that can be brought within the mechanical system of nature, and though they claim that what we thus know is the relative and phenomenal, they deny that we can extend our knowledge beyond this limited region.

A second class of thinkers attack the problem left by Kant in an entirely different way. They maintain that the abstract opposition of the theoretical and practical reason is untenable, and therefore they deny that ultimately there is any fundamental opposition between faith and knowledge. This is the attitude of Hegel and the English Idealists of the older type. Hegel makes two main criticisms of Kant. In the first place, he denies the abstract opposition of faith and knowledge, and therefore the abstract opposition of theoretical and practical reason upon which it is based. In the second place, he maintains that this false contrast is due to the unwarranted assumption that the highest conception involved in experience is that of a mechanical system of individual things. This is the general line of thought that has been followed by English Idealists. The first representative of this point of view was the late T. H. Green, who endeavoured to develop the positive part of the Kantian doctrine, while refusing to accept the principle of the primacy of practical reason. Green maintained with Kant that our ordinary experience of things presupposes the operation of the distinguishing and combining activity of thought. This being so,



## 140 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

he claimed that, as the world of experience exists only for a self-conscious being, we must interpret reality as a spiritual, not as a mechanical, system. On the other hand, Green holds that it is only by a gradual process that the spiritual system which constitutes reality comes into existence for us. The world is the manifestation of a spiritual being, but this being must be conceived as an "eternally complete consciousness," which is in no way affected by the process of experience in us. This contrast between the world of experience, as arising for us only in the process by which we gradually come to know it, and the world as it is for the eternally complete consciousness, leads Green to deny that we can be said to know God in an absolute sense. We do indeed know that "the world in its truth or full reality is spiritual," because nothing less will explain the fact of our experience, but "such a knowledge of the spiritual unity of the world as would be a knowledge of God" is impossible for us, or, as Green roundly puts it, "to know God we must be God." It is evident that Green has failed to justify adequately his contention that there is no opposition between knowable reality and reality as it absolutely is. In another way he restores the dualism between knowledge and faith which he inherited from Kant. Now, Mr. Bradley, in his *Appearance and Reality*, has attempted in his own way to go beyond the guarded attitude of Green and to define the Absolute or God. No one has emphasized more strongly than he the infinite complexity of the world, the manifest want of harmony and consistency in our ordinary experience and the impossibility of regarding it as an ultimate determination of reality. Nevertheless, he maintains that we are able in general to define

the nature of the Absolute. For, as he argues, our very inability to accept the contradictions which we find in our ordinary experience proves that, real as that experience is, it cannot be regarded as coincident with reality in its ultimate nature. Now, why do we condemn our ordinary experience? Is it not because it is inconsistent or self-contradictory? But this implies that we always presuppose true reality to be self-consistent. Moreover, as nothing can exist that falls entirely beyond all possible experience, the Absolute must be not only self-consistent, but a single or total experience. This, however, is as far as we can go. Ultimate reality is undoubtedly a harmonious whole, an absolute spiritual unity, and if we could put ourselves at the point of view of the Absolute, we should certainly find that the whole complexity of our experience—including science, morality, art, and religion—would be perceived as a single harmonious whole. Mr. Bradley, however, though he grants that there are "degrees of reality" within our experience, refuses to admit that even the highest form of reality known to us is an adequate characterization of the Absolute.

It can hardly be denied that in this doctrine of Mr. Bradley the opposition between knowledge and faith still survives, and hence it is perhaps not to be wondered at that Professor James should find this form of Idealism unsatisfactory and self-contradictory. He therefore in a sense recurs to the point of view of Kant, so far at least as to maintain that, while we cannot comprehend the true nature of reality by the exercise of the intellect we yet can discover how far the world as experienced by us responds to the claims of our fundamental needs. This view was partly indicated by Lotze, and it has also



## 142 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

been adopted to a certain extent by Mr. Balfour and others. Our special interest, however, lies in the form which it assumes under the hands of Professor James.

The main object Mr. James has in view is to "defend the legitimacy of religious faith"; that is, to show that we are in certain cases justified in believing that for which no definite evidence, in the ordinary sense of the term, can be advanced. This doctrine is the precise opposite of that which claims that nothing should be accepted as true which cannot justify itself at the bar of reason. Now, of course, Mr. James does not mean that we are in all cases to take as true what it suits us personally to believe. It may, for example, suit a political leader to believe that every member of his party is scrupulously honest, but he is not justified in taking his wish as equivalent to fact. Again, it would be very pleasant if a man who is roaring with rheumatism in bed could by believing that he was well at once become well, or if a man who has only a dollar in his pocket could convert it by his wish into a hundred dollars; but it is obvious that in such cases the talk of believing by our volition is simply silly. Indeed, from another point of view it is worse than silly, it is vile. "When one turns to the magnificent edifice of the physical sciences, and sees how it was reared; what thousands of disinterested moral lives of men lie buried in its mere foundations; what patience and postponement, what choking down of preference, what submission to the icy laws of outer fact are wrought into its very stones and mortar; how absolutely impersonal it stands in its vast augustness,—then how besotted and contemptible seems every little sentimentalist who comes blowing his voluntary smoke-wreaths, and pretending to decide things from out of

his private dream! Can we wonder if those bred in the rugged and manly school of science should feel like spewing such subjectivism out of their mouths? The whole system of loyalties which grow up in the schools of science go dead against its toleration; so that it is only natural that those who have caught the scientific fever should pass over to the opposite extreme, and write sometimes as if the incorruptibly truthful intellect ought positively to prefer bitterness and unacceptableness to the heart in its cup.

'It fortifies my soul to know  
That, though I perish, Truth is so'—

sings Clough, while Huxley exclaims: 'My only consolation lies in the reflection that, however bad our posterity may become, so far as they hold by the plain rule of not pretending to believe what they have no reason to believe, because it may be to their advantage so to pretend, they will not have reached the lowest depth of immorality.' And that delicious *enfant terrible* Clifford writes: 'Belief is desecrated when given to unproved and unquestioned statements for the solace and private pleasure of the believer. . . . Whoso would deserve well of his fellows in this matter will guard the purity of his belief with a very fanaticism of jealous care, lest at any time it should rest on an unworthy object, and catch a stain which can never be wiped away. . . . If a belief has been accepted on insufficient evidence (even though the belief be true, as Clifford in the same page explains), the pleasure is a stolen one. . . . It is sinful because it is stolen in defiance of our duty to mankind. That duty is to guard ourselves from such beliefs as from a pestilence which may shortly master our own body and then spread to the rest of the town. . . . It is wrong always,

## 144 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

everywhere, and for every one, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.'"<sup>1</sup>

Are we then to conclude that all beliefs are determined by pure reason? To do so would be to fly directly in the teeth of the facts. In truth we find ourselves believing we hardly know how or why. "Here in this room," says Mr. James, addressing a group of Harvard students, "we all of us believe in molecules and the conservation of energy, in democracy and necessary progress, in Protestant Christianity and the duty of fighting for 'the doctrine of the immortal Munroe,' all for no reasons worthy of the name. . . . Our reason is quite satisfied, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of every thousand of us, if it can find a few arguments that will do to recite in case our credulity is criticised by some one else. Our faith is faith in some one else's faith, and in the greatest matters this is most the case."<sup>2</sup>

Now, in what circumstances are we justified in exercising the "will to believe"? Under what conditions does a hypothesis presented to us for acceptance become a belief or conviction? In the first place, it must be *living*, not dead; that is, it must awaken a responsive interest in us, so that we do not at once set it aside as incredible. An hypothesis which has no relation to the individual thinker is dead, and therefore never passes into belief. If, for example, we are asked to believe that the Mahdi is a prophet of God, we are presented with an hypothesis which finds no response in us, and which is therefore instantly rejected. In the second place, no hypothesis ever becomes a belief unless the option of believing or rejecting it is *forced* upon us; in other words, it must be presented with an absolute alternative. Such an

<sup>1</sup>James' *Will to Believe*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

hypothesis is Christianity and Agnosticism. We must accept either the one alternative or the other. And lastly, the hypothesis presented must be *momentous*, not trivial. In what cases, then, are hypotheses presented to us which are at once *living*, *forced* and *momentous*? In the first place, such an hypothesis is the belief in the truth itself, the belief that there is truth and that our minds and it are made for each other. "What is this," asks Mr. James, "but a passionate affirmation of desire, in which our social system backs us up? We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussions must put us in a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. But if a pyrrhonistic sceptic asks us *how we know* all this, can our logic find a reply? No! certainly it cannot. It is just one volition against another,—we willing to go in for life upon a trust or assumption which he, for his part, does not care to make."<sup>1</sup> Nor is the matter different when we pass from the theoretical to the practical sphere. "Moral scepticism can no more be refuted or proved by logic than intellectual scepticism can." Moral questions cannot wait for solution upon sensible proof. Science can tell us what exists, but it cannot tell us what ought to exist. Thus "the question of having moral beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will. . . . If your heart does not *want* a world of moral reality your head will assuredly never make you believe in one."<sup>2</sup>

Not only in the general belief in truth and goodness, but in more concrete problems, we are forced to adopt an alternative for which no preponderating evidence can be adduced, and this choice is forced

<sup>1</sup> James' *Will to Believe*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.



## 146 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

upon us just in those cases that are most momentous for us. In scientific questions we are not thus driven to the wall, because "the option between losing truth and gaining it is not momentous," and therefore we can afford to miss the chance of *gaining truth*, and "at any rate save ourselves from any chance of *believing falsehoods*, by not making up our minds at all till objective evidence has come." "In our dealings with objective nature we obviously are recorders, not makers, of the truth. . . . Throughout the breadth of physical nature facts are what they are quite independently of us." What difference does it make to most of us whether we have or have not a theory of the X-rays? Here there is no forced option, and therefore it is better to go on weighing the reasons *pro* and *contra* with an indifferent hand.<sup>1</sup> But are there not options from which we cannot escape? Mr. James answers that there are. Such options we have in the case of all moral principles. Here in the absence of proof our "passional nature" must decide. It is the heart and not the head that makes us believe in moral laws. Thus we obtain the general thesis, that "our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds."<sup>2</sup> Again, while it is true that even in human affairs in general the need of acting is seldom so urgent that a false belief to act on is better than no belief at all, yet there are cases in which our principle applies. Healthy relations between persons demand trust and expectation, and indeed the desire for a certain kind of truth here brings about that special truth's existence. If you assume the nobility of a man, even where you

<sup>1</sup>James' *Will to Believe*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

have no objective evidence for your belief, you are likely to create in him that quality even if he did not originally possess it. So a social organism of any sort is possible only on the basis of mutual trust. "Wherever a desired result is achieved by the co-operation of many independent persons, its existence as a fact is a pure consequence of the precursive faith in one another of those immediately concerned. A government, an army, a commercial system, a ship, a college, an athletic team, all exist on this condition, without which not only is nothing achieved, but nothing is attempted." "There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming."<sup>1</sup> There is still another case, and that the most important of all, to which our principle applies, viz., *religious faith*. Whatever form religion assumes, it at least presupposes eternal perfection, and yet it is impossible to verify this belief scientifically. Now, here we must presuppose that we have an instance of a living hypothesis. If for any one religion is a hypothesis that cannot by any possibility be true, there is no way of convincing him of its truth; but where it is regarded as a real possibility, there can be no doubt that religion offers itself as a "momentous" option; and not only so, but it is a "forced" option, since we cannot escape the issue by remaining sceptical and waiting for more light, because if it is true we lose the good dependent upon it. Hence we are not justified in refusing to make our choice between belief and disbelief. We have here the right to believe "at our own risk." "When I look at the religious question," says Mr. James, "as it really puts itself to concrete men, and when I think of all the

<sup>1</sup>James' *Will to Believe*, pp. 24-25.

## 148 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

possibilities which both practically and theoretically it involves, then this command that we shall put a stopper on our heart, instincts, and courage, and *wait*—acting of course meanwhile more or less as if religion were *not* true—till doomsday, or till such time as our intellect and senses working together may have raked in evidence enough,—this command, I say, seems to me the queerest idol ever manufactured in the philosophic cave.”<sup>1</sup>

Without attempting anything like a detailed criticism of the doctrine of Mr. James, it may be pointed out that it rests throughout on two assumptions:—Firstly, that nothing can be verified except that which belongs to the sphere of external nature, and, secondly, that there is an absolute opposition between faith and knowledge. Now, it is rather curious that, although Mr. James has described Kant as a “curio,” his own doctrine, so far as these two assumptions are concerned, coincides with that of Kant. For it is one of the main positions of the *Critical Philosophy*, as we have seen, that knowledge is coterminous with sensible experience; in other words, with the connected system of individual objects which constitutes the world of nature. Holding this view, Kant naturally went on to maintain that all the distinctively human interests, including morality and religion, must be based upon faith. Now, it was pointed out by Kant’s immediate successors, and especially by Hegel, that the limitation of knowledge to the system of nature is a purely arbitrary assumption, resting upon the untenable hypothesis that the highest category constitutive of knowable objects is that of reciprocal action. Mr. James is involved in the same criticism. His main reason for denying that morality and

<sup>1</sup> James’ *Will to Believe*, pp. 29-30.

religion can be proved is his tacit assumption that nothing can satisfy the intellect except that which can be expressed in terms of mechanical causation. He seems to forget that the whole sphere of life, not to speak of consciousness, is inexplicable except from a teleological point of view, and that the system of nature itself is ultimately unintelligible unless it is interpreted from the same point of view.

A similar remark applies to the opposition between faith and knowledge. Even the proposition that there is truth and that it is obtainable by us is held to be beyond all rational evidence. Now, it is of course true that there is no way of proving the possibility of a true judgment by going beyond the whole sphere of knowledge. We can show the falsity of a particular or limited judgment by pointing out that it is inconsistent with some principle, the truth of which is admitted, but we cannot bring truth itself to the test of any higher principle. What we can do, however, is to show that even the denial of truth, since it is a judgment made by us, at least presupposes its own truth as a denial. Thus we may fairly argue, that the possibility of truth only seems to be lacking in evidence because it is the source of all evidence.<sup>1</sup>

This preliminary discussion of the pragmatic method will enable us to deal very shortly with Professor James' philosophy of religion. It is not possible, nor is it advisable, that I should attempt to reproduce the rich psychological or biographical material which he has supplied in his eloquent and instructive work. His treatment of the various types of religious

<sup>1</sup>Some remarks on the most recent form of Pragmatism, as expressed in Mr. James' *Pragmatism*, will be found in the note at the end of this lecture.

## 150 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

consciousness, and his estimate of their relative value for life, is broad, sane, and sympathetic; while nothing could well be more fascinating than the vividness and charm of his literary style. What we are specially concerned with, however, is the measure in which he has contributed to the solution of our special problem. This part of his work is as disappointing as the other is satisfactory. At bottom his speculative doctrine comes ultimately to this: that as the intellectual method of philosophy, as ordinarily understood, is abstract and ineffective, the source of religion must be sought for, not in the normal processes of the self-conscious life, but in the obscure regions of the "subliminal consciousness." Now, "it is one of the peculiarities of invasions from the sub-conscious region to take on objective appearances, and to suggest to the Subject an external control. In the religious life the control is felt as 'higher'; but since it is primarily the higher faculties of our own hidden mind which are controlling, the sense of union with the power beyond us is a sense of something, not merely apparently, but literally true."<sup>1</sup> "We have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which is literally and objectively true as far as it goes."<sup>2</sup> But what is the positive content of this experience? "The only thing that it unequivocally testifies to is that we can experience union with *something* larger than ourselves and in that union find our greatest peace. . . . All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough to trust for the next step. It

<sup>1</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 512-513.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 515.

need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger and more godlike self, of which the present self would then be but a mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realized in it at all."<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental vice of Mr. James' method of interpreting the religious consciousness seems to me to be its abstractness. No one is more emphatic than he in affirming that a theory of religion must be based upon "experience," and no one, as a matter of fact, has made so little use of it. The problem, as he puts it, is to ascertain whether there is any solid foundation for the belief in the "supernatural," *i.e.* as our author conceives it, in a universe or sphere of being which differs in kind from the world of order and law recognized by science. It is obvious that it is useless to appeal, in support of the existence of such a universe, to those who deny that a realm of caprice and arbitrariness can possibly be real. Hence the scientific man, with his invincible belief in inviolable law, is ruled out of court. Next, the theologian who postulates the existence of an Infinite Spirit is convicted of dogmatism. And, lastly, the philosopher who maintains that the universe is essentially rational and intelligible is condemned on the ground of his appeal to the ordinary processes of the conscious life. By this ingenious method of exclusion, the appeal to "experience" comes to mean an appeal either to those who have no scientific acquaintance with the world in which they live, or who regard the results of science as contradictory of religion. What is this but to limit "experience" to the intellectually weak and

<sup>1</sup>James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 525.

## 152 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

unreasonable? Nor is this all; for a still further limitation must be made. Even those who, like Professor James himself, are familiar with the world of science, must be excluded on the ground that they are destitute of a "leaky consciousness." Thus, in the end, it turns out that the only "experience" to which a valid appeal can be made, is the "experience" of those who are of a highly emotional, not to say hysterical, temperament. Such a method, as it seems to me, cannot possibly yield satisfactory results. Nevertheless, our author is not satisfied even yet. Visionaries, like other people, have a wide-awake consciousness, into which distinctly intellectual elements enter; and, therefore, they too must be liberated from the too great clarity of their ordinary experience, in order that the "subliminal consciousness" may be allowed the floor. Unfortunately, the "subliminal consciousness" gives forth a very confused and uncertain sound, for no two representatives of it agree in their testimony. We must therefore eliminate the discrepancies. What remains after this repeated process of elimination? Nothing but the vaguest presentiment that there is *something*—we know not what—which re-enforces life and brings comfort to its possessor. Perhaps the "something" may be God; perhaps it may be only a larger and more godlike self; and indeed it is difficult to understand why it should be anything more than an arbitrary product of the mysterious "subliminal" self—if indeed there is any "self," either sub-conscious, conscious, or super-conscious.

This whole method seems to me unsound. An appeal is made to "experience," but, instead of taking it as a whole, it is arbitrarily limited and re-limited until it fades away into the barest and vaguest of abstractions. Mr. James has appealed to Caesar, and



## RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE 153

to Caesar he must go. If religion is veritably to be based upon "experience," no one is justified in citing only the partial and fragmentary consciousness of this or that individual. A genuine inductive method must fix its eyes upon the whole wealth of experience, refusing to generalize from a mere fragment of it. Virtually to ignore the religious experience of the great majority of mankind, including all the scientific men, theologians and philosophers of our race, is a strange way of seeking for truth. Our author rightly blames those who rashly assume that nothing is real but that which can be compressed within the framework of mechanical law ; but, is it any more defensible first to separate the individual from all that gives meaning to his conscious life, and then to go behind even the conscious life, searching for the key to the riddle of existence in the dark abyss of the "sub-conscious"? A philosophy of religion which cannot find a place for the whole wealth of experience, including the results of science and philosophical speculation, seems to me to be self-condemned. If religion is a principle of unification, it must unify, not isolate ; whereas the method of Mr. James, instead of seeing in religion a further and higher synthesis than that of ordinary experience and of the special sciences, turns its back upon both, and tries to find in the aberrations of unbalanced emotion the secret of life. No doubt religion is emotional, but why should it be assumed that the emotion must be irrational, if it is to find a place in a true theory of religion? Our author himself admits that many of the "saints" whose experience he narrates were deficient in intellectual power ; but, instead of drawing the plain inference, that the highest form of the religious consciousness is to be found only in those who have the firmest grasp, intellectually as

## 154 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

well as emotionally, of the facts of life, he rules them out as unworthy to bear testimony at all.

The inadequacy of the method may be seen from a single instance. St. Paul is admitted to the company of the truly religious, not because of the general sanity of his whole conception of life, but because of his visions; in virtue of which he takes rank with the crowd of visionaries, whose testimony is relied on as witnesses for the reality of a spiritual world. Surely this is to prefer the accidental to the essential. It is no doubt true that, in men of intense emotional quality, truth tends to project itself in sensible and palpable images, to which they themselves and others are apt to attach undue importance. As a matter of fact, St. Paul was too sane to invert values in this irrational way; what he insisted upon was not his visions but his "prophecy," i.e. his whole view of the meaning of life; and even the lesser visionaries, to whose experiences Mr. James attaches inordinate value, owed their main influence, not to the erratic forms in which their beliefs were cast, but to the witness of their life and the essential truth embodied in it.

We are told that there is a sub-conscious continuation of the conscious life, and that there are persons in whom invasions from the sub-conscious life take on an objective appearance, and suggest to the subject of them an external control, which they feel as higher. Now, one may fairly ask in what sense the sub-conscious life is a "continuation" of the conscious life? The conscious life of a man is a "continuation" of the conscious life of a child, but it is the former, and not the latter, which is higher. Is the sub-conscious life, then, higher than the conscious? and if so, why? As Mr. James

admits that a great deal which comes out of the sub-conscious life is of the poorest possible character, it is obvious that we cannot conclude that a thing is higher merely because it emerges from the sub-conscious. To me it seems undeniable that the main difference between the sub-conscious and the conscious life consists in the vagueness and indefiniteness of the former as compared with the latter. The nearest approach to the sub-conscious is when the current of conscious life is at its lowest ebb, as in the case of the temporary exhaustion of the higher nerve-centres, or just before dropping off to sleep. And it is significant that, in either case, what possesses consciousness is a large, vague, fluctuating, indeterminate "something," with no clearly marked features,—exactly what Mr. James regards as the deliverance of the subliminal consciousness, except that in the latter even the poor minimum of definiteness which still survives has vanished away. It is hard to believe that this invertebrate state of mind is its highest form. Only those who identify the sublime with the indefinite can accept such an inversion of values. To me it seems almost self-evident that mind reaches its highest form in the unity of thought, emotion, and will; a unity in which there is a perfectly clear, if not always a consciously articulated, system of ideas. To seek for truth in the dark regions of the sub-conscious is to seek for the living among the dead. Those who, like the late Frederic Myers and Mr. James, try to persuade us that "God gives wisdom to his beloved in sleep," may be reminded of Hegel's sarcastic comment, that what we get in sleep is merely empty dreams.

We are assured that there are persons in whom "invasions" from the sub-conscious life take on an

## 156 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

objective form, and suggest external control. Is this psychological fact to be taken as a valid proof that there actually is "external control"? How is the transition made from the belief of these persons—admittedly not the clearest-headed of the race—to the objective reality of their belief? Is every belief which proceeds from the sub-conscious region to be taken as self-evidencing? And if not, by what criterion are we to distinguish beliefs that are true from those that are false? Mr. James does not accept the testimony of the sub-conscious as such, and that for the very sufficient reason, that it is by no means either self-consistent or free from ambiguity. It is very doubtful, in his opinion, whether the "objective reality," to which it seems to bear witness, is a God; our author rather thinks it is something very much less specific. Now, if the testimony of a witness is found hesitating and doubtful on such a fundamental point, how can we have any faith in it? I can understand the attitude of one who claims that the testimony of the sub-conscious must be accepted implicitly, on the ground that the lower cannot set aside the authority of the higher; but when it is admitted that this child-like attitude leads to confusion and self-contradiction, we seem forced to seek a way of escape out of an untenable position by falling back upon the conscious life, and invoking the aid of that very reason which Mr. James finds to be essentially imbecile and irreligious.

It may not be superfluous to close with a word or two on the question of "experience" as the basis of religion. In the widest sense of the term, a true theory of religion must be based upon religious experience; for what does not fall within our experience can have for us no meaning. But experience must

be taken in the widest possible sense. We cannot get any fruitful Results by simply describing the "experience" of this or that individual, in its isolation. To interpret the experience of the individual we have to consider the spiritual medium in which he lives, and the stage in the process of experience as a whole which he represents. For experience is essentially a process. To understand the experience of a St. Paul we must first estimate the experience of the prophets who preceded him and made his experience possible. No doubt the man of religious genius has an unique experience, and adds a new dimension to human life; but what gives his higher experience its convincing force is that it gathers up into itself the essence of all previous experiences and re-interprets them in the light of a new and more fruitful belief. To adopt the method of Mr. James—to disregard the stage in religious experience represented by the individual, and thus to look upon it as something that cannot be repeated in others—is a vicious method. Nor can the process of religious experience be rightly interpreted except by one who is able to view it in its relations to the total experience of the age in which it appears. The new religious experience transforms men's whole view of life, not merely a part of it, though its total bearing is never fully visible even to the man of genius, but requires, it may be, centuries to unfold in the fulness of its implications. It is here that philosophy is of such eminent service. No philosophy can take the place of experience: it is not life, but a theory of life; but it can discover wherein the advance to a higher stage consists, and what bearing the new truth has upon other spheres of life. Moreover, philosophy sums up the results of experience, and prepares the way for a

## 158 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

further advance. To set aside the patient labours of reflective thought, as embodied in theologies and philosophies, is a blind and unreasonable proceeding. Surely we may admit that philosophy cannot be a substitute for religious experience without denying it its function in helping to give order and system to the organic process of human evolution. Nor must we forget that clearness of thought is essential to the full development of experience, and therefore is an essential factor in the religious consciousness itself. Take this away, and there is no safeguard against the extravagances and aberrations of religious emotion, which, like all emotion, tends to over-balance itself. It is a gross mistake to suppose that emotion disappears, or loses its power, when it is purified by intelligence; on the contrary, it gains in effectiveness, at least in the long run. I think we are safe in saying that no religious genius of the first rank has ever lived whose insight was not equal to the strength of his emotion. It is the grasp of reality which is the source and measure at once of power of thought and depth of emotion.

### NOTE ON THE PRAGMATIC CONCEPTION OF TRUTH.

As originally set forth in his *Will to Believe*, Pragmatism was in Mr. James' hands little more than a working conception—it might almost be called a "dodge"—by which, in default of scientific evidence, one may contrive to live and to turn nature to one's own ends. We cannot, as it is there held, refute the sceptic on theoretical grounds, but we can at least get the better of him in practice; for, though we have no way of knowing whether we have even partially apprehended the world, not even the sceptic can show that we have not truly apprehended it; and we have always

## PRAGMATIC CONCEPTION OF TRUTH 159

the inestimable advantage over him, that the beliefs on which we act prove or disprove themselves practically in this way, that they either do or do not give satisfaction to our whole nature. The pragmatic method, as thus understood, is "primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable."<sup>1</sup> At the same time it "does not stand for any special results. It is a method only."<sup>2</sup>

After maintaining this guarded attitude for a number of years, Professor James seems at last to have convinced himself that Pragmatism is not merely a method, useful in exceptional cases, but a certain theory of truth ; and it is to the defence of this theory that his recent interesting and suggestive book is mainly devoted. My reasons for regarding this more ambitious form of Pragmatism as unsatisfactory I can only indicate in the shortest way.

It is now maintained without qualification that an idea is true only in so far as it leads to satisfying and successful experiences. This is the only legitimate sense, as we are assured, in which it can be said that an idea is in "agreement" with "reality." "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify."<sup>3</sup> Pragmatism therefore denies, firstly, that there is any distinction between the truth of an idea and the proof of its truth ; the truth of an idea consists in its verification.. It also denies, secondly, that there is any distinction between the truth of an idea and its practical usefulness in guiding towards desirable issues ; so that we can say either that an idea is useful because it is true, or that it is true because it is useful.

1. An idea, as it is argued, is not true because it conforms to reality, but only because it leads to a satisfying experience. Now, it must be admitted, I think, that truth is not a property which attaches to an idea in its isolation. Simply to entertain an idea is not to have a true idea, even if it should turn out that the idea so entertained is afterwards verified. When the idea that Mars moved in an elliptical orbit presented itself to the mind of Kepler, his idea was not true ; it only became true when it was found to be corroborated by the actual facts. Truth, in other words, exists only in judgments, and judgments are true only when they are based upon convincing evidence.

So far we must agree with the pragmatist. Truth, as he rightly maintains, cannot be separated from the process of

<sup>1</sup>James' *Pragmatism*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

## 160 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

verification. But, not contented with this conditional statement, the pragmatist contends that truth has no other meaning than its power of leading to a satisfying experience. With this contention I am unable to agree. There is no doubt a sense in which the object of experience *grows* or is *made*, but it is not a sense which justifies the reduction of truth to verifiability. Since the "object" is the "experienced" object—the total "situation," as the pragmatist puts it—the object of the "idea," as entertained prior to the proof of its truth, and the object of the "judgment" differ as undeveloped and developed "object." The ordinary account of a true idea as a "copy" of the real object is obviously untenable, for the so-called "real object" exists only in the "true idea," and an idea cannot be a copy of itself. The developed idea, or judgment, is not different from the developed object, but is simply the developed object looked at from the side of the subject. But, while this is true, it does not follow that the truth of a judgment consists in its verification. When is a tentative idea capable of verification? Only when it is in harmony with the conditions of experience, general and special. A given judgment is true which expresses what is compatible with the total system of experience; by which we must not understand either a mere succession of impressions, or what we call "Nature," but the complex of conditions, external and internal, without which a given experience could not be. The pragmatist, tacitly assuming that we cannot comprehend reality as it is, is led to identify truth with what gives satisfaction. And obviously some such view must be advanced by anyone who denies that we can know the real world to be a single system. If, on the other hand, it is admitted that there is only one self-consistent reality, however various its particular manifestations may be, then the only true judgments will be those which are compatible with the total system of things. From this point of view we can understand how there may be a transition from a tentative idea, or hypothesis, to a judgment, and how a judgment may be true without being a "copy" of a real object lying beyond experience. Nor does this conception of truth imply that in the real world there are no changes; what it implies is that those changes are not arbitrary, but proceed upon a fixed principle. Truth, in short, presupposes a rational universe, which we, as rational, may comprehend.

2. From what has been said it follows that the second denial of

## PRAGMATIC CONCEPTION OF TRUTH 161

the pragmatist is equally fallacious. An idea is not "*made true*" by its satisfactory consequences, but it has these consequences because it is true. It would be passing strange if in a rational universe our fundamental needs were incapable of satisfaction ; and as the desire for truth is one of those needs, and admittedly one which is essential to the satisfaction of the others, it is not surprising that when we hit upon an idea which agrees with the totality of our experience, we should experience the joy of a fulfilled desire. And as our experience is continually growing, we can also understand how it comes about that a partial truth, taken as the whole, should lead to dissatisfaction when it is found to be incompatible with our wider experience. In a sense, therefore, no single judgment is absolutely true ; nevertheless, judgments are true in so far as they involve and conform to the principle of the whole ; and when a judgment which has been accepted as final and complete is seen to be only a partial determination of reality, it does not follow that it loses all its truth, but only that it is absorbed in a wider truth.

3. Holding that truth is what leads to a successful and satisfying experience, the pragmatist naturally regards the various categories by which we systematize our experience as simply "postulates," or "hypotheses," which owe their validity to their success. "Our fundamental ways of thinking about things are discoveries of exceedingly remote ancestors, which have been able to preserve themselves throughout the experience of all subsequent time."<sup>1</sup> These common-sense conceptions, as we are told, by the prescriptive right of immemorial custom, have come to seem axiomatic and absolutely indubitable ; but there is nothing to hinder us from supposing that quite different categories "could have proved on the whole as serviceable for handling our experiences mentally as those which we actually use. . . . All our conceptions are what the Germans call *Denkmittel*, means by which we handle facts by thinking them."<sup>2</sup> Nor is it different with the categories employed by the special sciences and by philosophy. "There are, then, at least three well-characterized levels, stages or types of thought about the world we live in, and the notions of one stage have one kind of merit, those of another stage another kind. It is impossible, however, to say that any stage as yet in sight is absolutely more *true* than another."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James' *Pragmatism*, p. 170.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

## 162 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

It seems to be assumed that, if the categories by which we organize our experience have been developed in the process of experience, we thereby deprive them of any claim to truth in any other sense than that of their enabling us to find our way through what would otherwise be an impassable jungle. Now, while it is certain that such categories as "thing," "identity," "atom," "reality," are not rigid and unchanging forms, belonging to our intelligence by its original constitution, it seems to me no less certain that they are not mere "working-conceptions." The presupposition of an intelligible reality is that it should be a self-determined and self-consistent whole, and therefore any less comprehensive conception will inevitably reveal its limitations if it is treated as ultimate. On the other hand, no category of a purely fictitious character can help us to organize our experiences, because such a category must be in fundamental antagonism to the real universe. If this is admitted, it cannot be conceded that there are other categories which might have "proved as serviceable for handling our experiences as those which we actually use." On such a view the development of experience, in any intelligible sense of the term, is unmeaning. For, if the supposed categories should not only *differ* from ours, but actually *contradict* them, we must be living in an irrational universe, in which "to be" and "not to be" mean the same thing; while, if they should be merely a variation of ours, they would be in essence the same, and therefore distinguishable only in form. It seems to me entirely fallacious to refer to the different geometries of Euclid and Descartes in defence of the merely instrumental character of our categories; for those geometries are not *contradictory* of each other, but are related as less and more comprehensive formulations of the external world in its quantitative aspect. On this analogy, therefore, the categories by which we escape from the chaos of sensible impressions cannot be viewed as merely convenient instruments; they must be, each in its degree, a veritable, though inadequate, comprehension of reality. They do actually bring to light certain characteristics of the real world, and only become false when they are viewed as if they were exhaustive definitions of it. For there can only be one completely exhaustive definition of reality, a definition which must include within itself the whole truth, as embodied, dispersedly and more or less confusedly, in the various categories of common sense, science and philosophy.

## PRAGMATIC CONCEPTION OF TRUTH 163

We must, therefore, deny that the three grades of categories stand upon the same level : they are related as successively more comprehensive determinations of the real universe. No doubt we cannot escape from the pragmatic doctrine if we admit its view of truth. If "it is impossible to say that any stage as yet in sight is absolutely more *true* than another" : if we can say no more than that "common sense is *better* for one sphere of life, science for another, philosophical criticism for a third" : then we must indeed give up the quest for a rational view of the world. We must do so, because with the admission that we do not comprehend reality itself, but only succeed in organizing our individual experiences for our own limited ends, we have made it impossible to say anything whatever about reality ; for aught we can show, every category we use may not only be inadequate to characterize it, but may distort it into its precise opposite.

4. That this is the inevitable result of the pragmatic reduction of truth to expediency is shown clearly in the conclusion to which it leads. If truth is merely "satisfying experience," certainly we "cannot reject any hypothesis if consequences useful to life flow from it."<sup>1</sup> Whatever we find useful is to that extent true, and true solely because it is useful. The idea of the Absolute, we are told, has been proved of use "by the whole course of men's religious history." But, as we may fairly object, if this category, like all others, is true only in the sense that it has helped to introduce order into our experience, there is nothing to show that its opposite might not have been equally useful ; while, on pragmatic premises, neither may be in agreement with the real nature of things. We are told that it is Pluralism which "agrees with the pragmatic temper best."<sup>2</sup> If so, must we not accept it, as the idea which best makes for satisfaction ? Monism is practically held to be but a *pis aller* ; and it is hardly the part of good sense to accept a worse, when we have a better, way of organizing our experiences. We are expressly told that "the rational unity of things" really means "their possible empirical *unification*." The "world's perfection," as we are assured, is only "a possible *terminus ad quem*."<sup>3</sup> But is the "world's perfection" for the pragmatist even "possible" ? If our categories are not determinations of reality, but only *our* ways of organizing the *Gewühl* of our impressions, it is difficult to see how, by any extension of experience, we come one whit

<sup>1</sup> James' *Pragmatism*, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

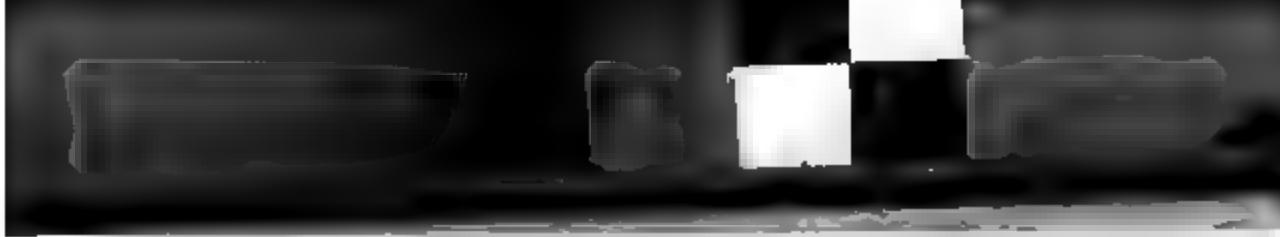
## **164 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

nearer to reality, and therefore difficult to understand how the "world's perfection" can be declared even "possible." The

"possible" cannot contradict the essential nature of the "real," and as we never come in contact with reality at all, what may, or

may not, be "possible" lies entirely beyond our ken. No wonder

we are told that "it is our faith and not our logic" which decides ultimate questions!



## LECTURE SEVENTH

### CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

IN the present lecture I propose to complete the consideration of those views which accentuate the personal side of religion, by a somewhat careful examination of Professor Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, a work which deservedly enjoys a very high reputation and has had a marked influence, especially upon popular liberal theology. This work differs from Mr. James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* in basing its conclusions on historical Christianity, not upon psychological data. The absence, indeed, of any theory of historical evolution in Mr. James' work is one of the things which at once strikes a reader in these days when the idea of development is almost assumed as axiomatic and is applied as a matter of course in all departments of thought. At first sight this seems to put the historian of dogma and the psychologist in an entirely different class; but, if the criticism of last lecture is at all sound, there is less divergence between the two thinkers than may at first sight appear; for, while it is true that Professor James arranges his specific material without any reference to its place in the history of thought, Professor

## 166 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Harnack, as I shall try to show, virtually ignores all development in Christian doctrine and in the Christian consciousness. Nor is this agreement a matter of accident; for both writers either deny the possibility of a philosophy of religion, or at least seek to reduce it to the simplest possible elements.

Ever since the days of Schleiermacher there has been in Germany an influential school of theologians who have sought to free religion from what they regard as the cramping and benumbing effects of the traditional creed. The starting-point of this movement was in one way simply a fresh appeal, in the spirit of the Reformation, to the immediate consciousness of the divine; but in the hands of Schleiermacher it was exaggerated into an emotional mysticism, which set the heart at war with the head, and was only prevented from degenerating into a wild carnival of feeling by the unrecognized presence and restraining influence of reason. The pathway opened up by Schleiermacher was followed later by Ritschl, who makes use of the phenomenalist side of the Critical Philosophy, as modified by Lotze, in support of a sceptical doctrine of knowledge, maintaining that the sole ground and value of our belief in God is its influence on our own higher life. God is love, and all statements as to the absoluteness and self-existence of God are but "heathenish metaphysics"; though Ritschl, with obvious inconsistency, refuses to surrender the independent reality of God. Corresponding to the love of God is the kingdom of God, *i.e.* the union of men for mutual and common action from the motive of love; a love which, as Ritschl in his later views affirms, derives its origin from the revelation of God in Christ. Jesus he regards as the representative of the perfect spiritual religion, and his life as a permanent rule for us.

## CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY 167

This is the school of thought in which Professor Harnack has been trained, and its impress is visible in his conception of the religious life. The history of dogma, as he conceives it, is a record of the progressive obscuration of the truth by the action upon the simple faith of Jesus and his immediate disciples of Hellenic philosophy and other "secularizing" influences. ✓ The Christian religion is something simple and sublime; it means one thing and one thing only: Eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God." ✓ This essence of all religion is to be found in Jesus Christ and his Gospel, though we must also listen to what the first generation of his disciples tell us of the effect which he had upon their lives; and we must also take account of the rekindling again and again of the spiritual life which burned in them. ✓ "It is not a question of a 'doctrine' being handed down by uniform repetition or arbitrarily distorted, but a question of a *life*"; and "life cannot be spanned by general conceptions"; for "there is no general conception of religion to which actual religions are related simply and solely as species to genus." ✓ The business of the historian is, therefore, not to seek for a system of doctrine in the Christian records, but to determine what is of permanent value in those records; and this can only be done by finding out what is common to all the forms which the Christian idea has taken, corrected by reference to history. Thus we may recover the divine lineaments of Christianity, and find in it nourishment for our higher life. - The message of Jesus and its influence upon the soul is the essence of Christianity, not the marvels by which it has been embellished, the dogmas in which it has been formulated, or the institutions in which it has been embodied. The Gospel may be said to consist in the glad tidings of the kingdom of

## 168 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

God as present here and now ; of God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul to Him and to itself ; of the higher righteousness and the new commandment of love, as dependent for realization on humanity or openness to the love of God. In these truths is contained the whole of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that there is much in this view of Harnack which commends itself to the educated man of to-day. The dogmas of the Church, in their traditional form, he has outgrown, and he is apt to look with suspicion on the attempts of recent thinkers to reconstruct them in the light of modern thought. It is therefore with peculiar satisfaction that he hears a scholar of the first rank, who has written one of the best histories of Christian dogma, say that no matter what the results of Biblical criticism and historical investigation may be, or in what vagaries of speculation metaphysicians may indulge, Christianity, as essentially life in the Eternal, cannot be affected by the changing fashions of an age. How far can we reconcile this simplification of religion with the just claims of our intellect? Can we admit that "life cannot be spanned by general conceptions," and that religion is simply and solely a thing of the heart?

So far as a distinction is meant to be drawn between religion as the personal experience of the individual, and theology, or the philosophy of religion, as a systematic statement of the truth which that experience presupposes, Harnack is no doubt right; though it may be added that it would be hard to find any representative thinker who would not admit the distinction and even emphasize its importance. But, when it is admitted that religion is not philosophy, it does not follow either that religion can exist in absolute separa-

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's *What is Christianity?* pp. 8 ff.

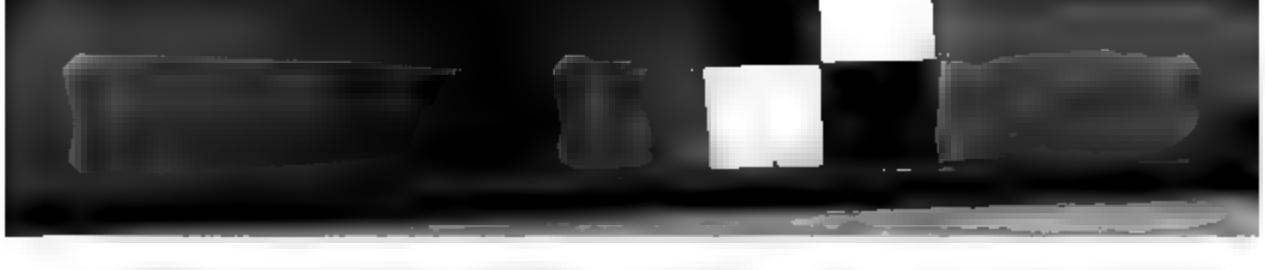
tion from all "general conceptions," or that by its very nature every philosophy must necessarily distort or annihilate it. As I have already argued, religion is possible only for a being who is possessed of reason, and indeed of reason as the intellectual comprehension of reality. No doubt a being of pure intellect is an impossible monster of abstraction, but a purely sentient being who lives in the realm of the spirit is not less fictitious. Whatever else religion may be, it involves, as Harnack himself admits, the consciousness of something higher than man and the Christian religion, on his own showing, involves the consciousness of God as Father. And surely it is almost a truism to say, that only a being who is conscious of himself can be conscious of something higher than himself. But the consciousness of self, with the correlative consciousness of the higher-than-self, is impossible in any being that is destitute of the power to frame "general conceptions," and indeed, in any being who has not already in some sense framed that most "general" of all conceptions, the conception of a single all-comprehensive principle to which all things are somehow related.

It may be said, however, that the consciousness of some unifying principle higher than man is not the same thing as the abstract conception of such a principle; for, while the former is a concrete experience, involving the response of the whole nature to the divine, the latter sets aside and discounts that vivid and living experience, and thus falls into an unreal abstraction. This objection really rests upon a misapprehension of the true character of conception. It is perfectly true that the personal consciousness of the divine can exist, and does often exist, in individuals who display very little power of theoretical reflection;

## 170 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

for this is only to say that philosophy is a special enquiry, like other branches of knowledge, and demands in those who prosecute it a certain power of raising their individual experiences into universal forms. For them the conception of self or God is in one sense more abstract, and in another sense more concrete, than for the "plain man" who is not given to reflection. It is more abstract, in so far as the idea of self or God has been made an object of exclusive and concentrated attention ; it is more concrete, because this act of abstraction has brought to light the infinity which is involved in this as in every other conception. It is the marvellous power of thought that it is able to comprehend the absolutely universal—that which applies not only to the given instance, but to every possible instance. Thus, the conception of self applies to every possible self that ever has been, is, or will be ; just as the conception of God involves the idea of a unity which embraces all possible objects, however various in their characteristics they may be. Without the activity of thought there obviously can be no philosophy of religion, for philosophy lives in the medium of thought. But, what is more important for our immediate purpose, without thought there can be no religion ; for, though religion cannot be resolved into thought, it necessarily includes thought ; since, whether or not it is recognized by the subject, there is no religion apart from the idea of the divine. That idea, it is true, does not in the first instance present itself in the form of a conception or universal ; but, though it may not be made an explicit object of reflection, its presence as informing the whole being is essential to the existence of the religious consciousness.

Why, then, does Harnack speak as if the religious consciousness were possible without thought ? He does



## CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY 171

so, as I think, because he assumes that the absence of explicit conception is the same thing as the absence of conception in any sense. He sees that a man may be religious without having any definite theory of religion, and he therefore concludes that religion is possible independently of all conception. But one is entitled to ask, how there can be any consciousness of that which is higher than self for a being that is not conscious of self; and how there can be any consciousness of self without the comprehension of self as the subject of an infinite variety of possible experiences. If from the religious consciousness we eliminate all universals, and reduce it to pure feeling, there can be no consciousness of a universal self, or of God as the principle of all reality. If, on the other hand, it is admitted that the religious consciousness lives in the medium of universals, to deny that religion involves conception is to remove from it that without which it cannot exist.

We must, then, as it seems to me, refuse to admit that the personal experience of religion is possible apart from the universalizing and unifying activity of thought. On the other hand, the activity of thought cannot be identified with the religious consciousness in its fulness and complexity; and it is this fact which gives force to the contention that "life is more than thought," and to the false inference that there is "life" without "thought." If we take a cross section of our personal experience at any moment, we shall find that it contains three distinguishable but inseparable elements: thought, feeling, and will. This is true of all experience, and therefore of religious experience. Hence, to identify religion with the intellectual comprehension of the divine, thus isolating thought from feeling and will, is like breaking up an organism into parts and declaring that the *disjecta membra* are still

## 172 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

alive. Religion is the response of the whole man to what is higher than himself, and therefore it implies not only the conception of the divine, but love of it and self-surrender to it. The attempt to suppress any one of these elements must therefore be fatal to the integrity of the whole. Harnack is especially impressed by the complex character of the religious consciousness, seeing clearly that its reduction to a mere conception destroys its essential character by removing that feeling of reverence and that active willing of the divine which are indispensable to it ; but, in his eagerness to liberate the lives of men from the burden of a "creed out-worn," or rather overgrown, he forgets that feeling and will are just as impossible without thought as is thought without feeling and will. When he contends for the independence of religion on dogma, he is so far right that religion can exist in the individual even in the absence of a definitely formulated creed ; but when he assumes that religion may exist without implying any intellectual element, he virtually affirms that it cannot be formulated, and therefore is essentially irrational. If his view were sound, it would be possible to preserve the religious consciousness while removing from it everything in the way of universal ideas ; and indeed the only legitimate conclusion would seem to be, that, as religion is altogether independent of such ideas, their removal must purge it of an adscititious element which tends to destroy its purity and power.

Now, before we commit ourselves to this questionable doctrine, it is important to distinguish between what a man believes that he believes, and what he really believes. As Jowett once said, speaking of the belief in Christianity : "As there are many who say they are and are not, so may we not also say that there are many who say they are not and yet are ?"

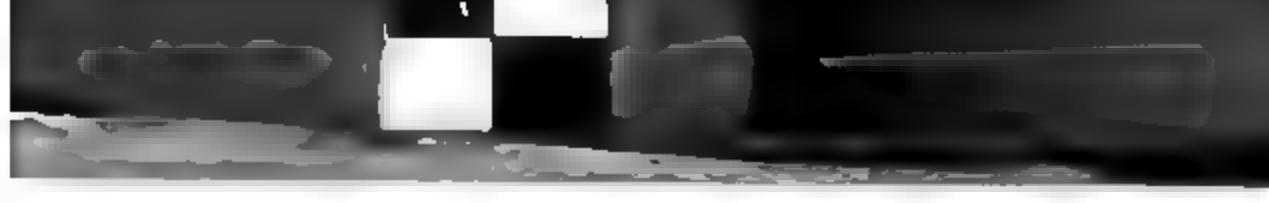
Socrates was condemned to death, among other things for "denying the gods of his country"; but we should now say that for the charge of atheism should be substituted the commendation of theism. A man in our day may reject the traditional conception of the divine, because he regards it as subversive of religion, and his denial may be really equivalent to the assertion of a purified conception of it. But, while this is true, it hardly affects the problem at present under discussion, namely, whether it is possible, after penetrating behind the words in which a man's real thought may be veiled, to have a religion which does not, at least implicitly, rest upon belief in the divine. Now, it seems to me undeniable, that we cannot properly speak of religion except where there is the consciousness of something higher than the actual. It is true that in the earliest form of religion of which we have any knowledge, the belief in the divine is at once vague and fluctuating. But this only shows that the religious consciousness is at first hardly aware of what it really involves. Remove the belief in something in some sense divine, and with it the religious feeling of which it is the support dies, so that it ceases to have any influence upon men's lives. When primitive man's belief in the mysterious sanctity and divinity of his totem dies, he no longer worships it, but discards it as a detected sham. And at a more developed stage, with the conclusion that the gods of his fathers were creatures of his own imagination, the faith of the Greek in his national religion vanished away, and for the gods who had come to seem incredible to him he substituted a single deity, or at least a Fate, which subjected all things to its sway. Similarly, the scientific man of our own day, who is convinced that there is no such

## 174 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

thing as chance or supernatural interference with the inviolability of natural law, cannot believe in or worship a Being who is declared to be arbitrary and capricious, and he is therefore apt to speak of Nature, when at the basis of his faith lies the conception of a Principle in which is embodied all that may most fitly be called divine. I think, therefore, we may fairly assert that the religious consciousness, in its lowest as in its highest form, implies the belief in God. Nor is Buddhism or Comtism any real exception to this law, for in both what is reverenced is not any mere assemblage of individual men, but an ideal of humanity which differs only in words from what other faiths characterize as divine. The only thing that is fatal to a religion is the conviction that it has no basis in the nature of things.

The conclusion to which we have been brought is virtually endorsed by Harnack, inconsistent as it is with his attempt to reduce religion to a form of feeling; for, though he insists, and in a certain sense rightly insists, that "the Gospel is no theoretical system of doctrine or philosophy," he yet admits that the Christian religion involves "the reality of God the Father"; and by this admission he practically maintains that without the consciousness of the divine religion is impossible. Harnack would hardly contend that "the reality of God the Father" is in any sense doubtful; on the contrary, it is for him the one truth upon which all religion, or at least the Christian religion, is based. Here, then, is one absolutely true judgment. But, unless we are to base this judgment upon mere authority—and I do not understand that our author takes that view—we must admit that in this case we have a conception which is consistent with the religious consciousness. Now, once admit

the principle that there may be harmony between religion and theology, and we can no longer oppose the one to the other. The "Gospel," no doubt, is not a "theoretical system of doctrine or philosophy of the universe," but the record of a living personal experience; nevertheless it must contain, in an immediate or unreflective form, ideas that may be expressed in a system;—ideas, moreover, which in their totality must be consistent with one another, and must therefore form an organic unity. It is these ideas that a philosophy of religion has to express; and to say that they cannot be identified with the religious experience which they seek to formulate, in no way detracts from their truth or their importance. Harnack himself reaches what he regards as the "essence" of Christianity, not by taking the Christian consciousness at any stage, even the earliest, as absolutely free from error, but only by conceiving it to contain an imperishable "kernel" of truth; and this is at bottom identical with the aim of the philosophy of religion, as I understand it, widely as the content of that philosophy may differ from the bare residuum with which he identifies it. It would thus seem that if we follow out to its logical consequences the admission, almost inadvertently made by our author, that Christianity presupposes the truth of the doctrine that "God is Father," we cannot assent to his thesis, that the Gospel and Theology are inharmonious; rather we must grant that in a sense Theology, or the Philosophy of Religion, is the inevitable development of the Gospel. This point is so important that it will repay us to consider somewhat more closely what is involved in the assertion that "the reality of God the Father" is the "essence" of "the Gospel."



## 176 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

It can hardly be maintained that the predicate "Father," as applied to God, is to be taken in a baldly literal sense. Like much of our language, the term involves a metaphor, though no doubt a metaphor which has the large suggestiveness of all apt literary expression. It must of course be admitted that, in its direct or immediate form, the religious consciousness shrinks from any attempt to enquire too curiously into the precise meaning of such a term, as if it were a sort of profanation ; but, natural as this feeling is, the more reflective minds of our age are simply unable to remain permanently satisfied with terms that have not been precisely defined. What, then, are we to understand by the proposition that "God is Father"? After the somewhat laborious investigations of former lectures we may assume that by the term "God" is meant at least the Being from whom all proceeds and to whom all tends, and that the predicate "Father" implies that we are related to this Being as free self-conscious spirits to the universal Spirit, in union with whom alone our nature is capable of being realized. This conception of God may be, and has been, denied ; but it cannot be consistently denied by one who, like Professor Harnack, regards the reality of God as inseparable from the religious consciousness. Now, if it is admitted that religion involves the objective existence of God, it is impossible at the same time to deny that it implicitly contains a "theoretical system of doctrine or philosophy of the universe." If we are to give any precise meaning to what is called the belief in "the reality of God the Father," we must grant that the ultimate principle of the universe is a self-manifesting Spirit, and that man is identical in nature with God ; and it is merely playing with words to deny that this involves a "theoretical

system of doctrine or philosophy of the universe." No doubt it may still be denied that reason can evolve such a "system" out of itself, and on this ground it may be argued that we must base the reality of God upon a supernatural revelation. But the supposition that reason can evolve anything "out of itself," i.e. in absolute independence of experience, is a fallacy hardly worthy of refutation; while the attempt to base religion upon authority is, as we have seen, essentially suicidal, besides being inconsistent with Harnack's own view of the self-evidencing character of the religious consciousness. Human experience is essentially rational, and may be shown to be such; but any attempt to derive its content from abstract conceptions must end in failure, just as no revelation is possible that does not appeal to the experience of the race. What we must hold then is, that the religious consciousness, in its most comprehensive sense, involves a rational system; which, when it is expressly formulated by reason, yields a philosophy of religion; or, to keep more closely to Harnack's point of view, that in the Christian consciousness is imbedded a conception of the universe which may be developed into a Christian philosophy of religion.

Perhaps enough has been said to show that Harnack cannot consistently admit the "doctrine" of the "reality of God the Father" without abandoning his thesis, that theology does not deal with the "essence" of Christianity, but only with the temporary and evanescent forms assumed by it in self-defence. The more closely we examine into the reasons he advances for setting up an opposition between religion and philosophy, the more does it become manifest that he is continually contradicting himself. Nor is this due to any want of skill on his part, but to the

## 178 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

fundamental contradiction inseparable from his main thesis. The task he has set himself, as he tells us, is to solve the problem, What is the Christian religion? and to solve it from purely historical data. At first sight it may seem, as he goes on to say, that the Christian religion is the religion announced by its Founder, and thus the problem apparently narrows itself down to an enquiry into the life and sayings of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, together with a few items gathered from the writings of St. Paul and other sources. And when we speak of the Gospels in this connection, we mean only the synoptic Gospels; for "the fourth Gospel was not written, nor does it claim to be written, by the Apostle John." We cannot, however, really confine ourselves to Jesus and his Gospel, "because every great and powerful personality reveals a part of what it is only when seen in those whom it influences." Nor can we stop even "with the first generation of Jesus' disciples"; but "we must include all the later products of its spirit." Our author denies, however, that "the question is of a 'doctrine' being handed down by uniform tradition or arbitrarily distorted: it is a question of a *life*, again and again kindled afresh, and now burning with a flame of its own."<sup>1</sup> The business of the historian is to "determine what is of permanent value"; so that he "must not cleave to words," but "find out what is essential." "What is common to all the forms which the Christian idea has taken, corrected by reference to the Gospel, and, conversely, the chief features of the Gospel, corrected by reference to history, will . . . bring us to the kernel of the matter."<sup>1</sup>

Now, there is one obvious objection to this position. Not to insist upon the difficulty of separating what

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's *What is Christianity?* pp. 10-15.

may with certainty be attributed to Jesus himself from what is due to the interpretation, or misinterpretation, of his disciples, it is hard to see how, by a purely historical investigation, we are to determine wherein the "essence" of Christianity consists. Suppose it to be granted, in the most unequivocal way, that we know precisely what was held by Jesus, and what was introduced by his followers; how can we in this way reach the "kernel of the matter"? If indeed our author held that the Gospel was identical with what was taught by Jesus himself, and that all changes in it are to be viewed as distortions of its purity, one might admit that the problem was a "purely historical" one. But Harnack does not take that view. "Jesus Christ and his disciples," as he tells us, "were situated in their day just as we are situated in ours; that is to say, their feelings, their thoughts, their judgments and their efforts were bounded by the horizon and the framework in which their own nation was set and by its condition at the time."<sup>1</sup> For example, "there can be no doubt about the fact that the idea of the two kingdoms, of God and of the devil, and their conflicts, was an idea which Jesus simply shared with his contemporaries."<sup>2</sup> Hence "the historian's task of distinguishing between what is traditional and what is peculiar, between kernel and husk, in Jesus' message of the kingdom of God is a difficult and responsible one."<sup>3</sup> How, then, one naturally asks, is the historian to accomplish this "difficult and responsible" task? Without insisting upon the literal meaning of the term, may we not say that it is the business of the historian to tell us in this case, what, as a matter of fact, Jesus actually taught, not to determine how much of his

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's *What is Christianity?* p. 12.

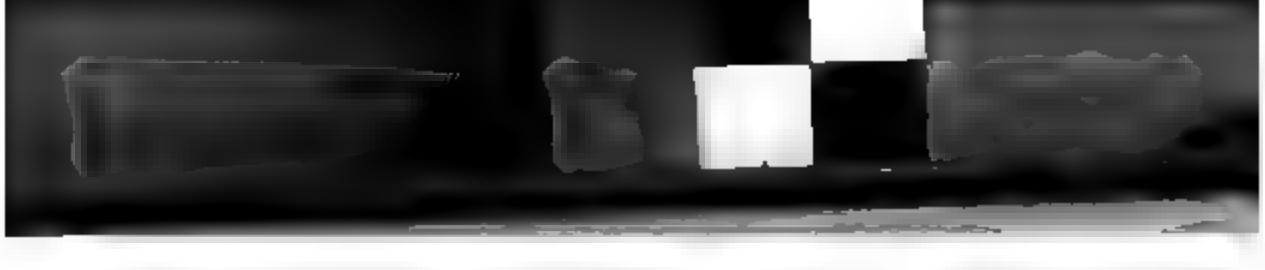
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

## 180 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

teaching is permanent? When we go on to ask how much is permanent and how much transitory, we enter upon an investigation that leads us very far beyond the proper problem of the historian. If with Harnack we regard all doctrine as excluded from the "essence" of Christianity, we shall no doubt limit Christianity as he does; but, on the other hand, if we hold that Christianity is not merely a personal faith, but contains a revelation of the ultimate nature of things, our view of what is "essential" will differ very much from his. On what ground does Harnack exclude that part of Jesus' teaching which he claims to have been common to Jesus with others of his age and country? Is it not on the ground that the subsequent history of the race proved that this part was not consistent with fact? The kingdom of heaven did not come in a few years, and indeed our author would not admit that it will ever come, in the literal sense which he ascribes to Jesus and his disciples. Is it not obvious, then, that his real reason for rejecting this part of what he regards as the teaching of Jesus is that the subsequent development of knowledge has made it incredible? If, therefore, a distinction is to be drawn between the permanent and the temporary element in the teaching of Jesus, as Harnack maintains, must it not be on the ground that the former is in harmony with the nature of things, while the latter is not? In other words, the permanent element in the teaching of Jesus must be held to command our assent, not because it has the impress of his authority—for if so, all that he taught would be equally authoritative—but because it is true.

The point I wish to make, as you will observe, is not that we are to identify Christianity with the form in which it is maintained to have been originally



## CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY 181

expressed, but that a purely historical investigation can bring us no further. So far as the historian goes, his task is done when he has told us what he believes Jesus as a matter of fact to have actually held : as a historian he cannot tell us whether the teaching of Jesus, as a whole or in part, was true or false. The moment we ask whether, or how far, the teaching is true, we enter upon an enquiry which can only be solved by a complete philosophy of religion.

There is another point. Harnack seeks for the "essence" of religion in a permanent nucleus of religious feeling, first experienced by Jesus, and subsequently reproduced in the experience of every one of his followers. Now, as has been already pointed out, it may be admitted that, if we are speaking of religion, as distinguished from theology, there is a certain amount of truth in this contention. Every religious man experiences the uplifting power of the divine, and in that sense it may be said that religion is unchangeable. But, after all, this is a partial or abstract view. For, though there is an identical element in the religious consciousness of all Christians, in none, as Harnack himself admits, is it absolutely the same. Even the least reflective man has some way of construing life, and his religious experience is not separable from this construction. But what is of main importance here, each man participates in the ideas of his time, and as these again are only made possible by the whole previous experience of the race, he may well be under the influence of ideas of which he can give no definite account. Such ideas have not fallen from heaven : they first arose in the consciousness of some man of genius, or they have been won by the long and severe toil of many. It is impossible, for example, that a religious man, who at the same time shares in the main

## 182 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

ideas of our age, should believe in religious cataclysms ; for our whole view of things is so permeated by the idea of development, that even when we can give no account of our religious beliefs, or at best a slip-shod and confused account, we instinctively reject any explanation of their origin which cuts them off from the past. Now, it is curious that Professor Harnack should virtually ignore this side of things. He regards religion, almost from the point of view of a pre-evolutionist age, as a permanent and unchanging kernel, enclosed in an external husk of doctrines, the value of which consists, not in its truth, but in its fitness to preserve the truth from injury or destruction. The husk is perpetually changing and decaying, while the kernel remains always the same. Such a view cannot be regarded as final. If it were true, we should have to maintain that there is an imperishable and unchanging nucleus of religion which is common to the lowest and the highest forms of the religious consciousness. Thus Christianity would in no way differ on its personal side from the crassest animism. The real truth is that both religion and theology have developed, and on the whole developed *pari passu*. Man does not stand still in part and in part develop : when he changes his whole being changes. No doubt this or that element of his nature may receive temporary emphasis, but, in the long course of history, all the elements advance together. It is, therefore, a mistake to look for the "essence" of Christianity in any unchanging "kernel" : its real "essence" is to be sought in its living power of self-development. It is a natural parallax which leads us to imagine that we can discover the real nature of Christianity by enquiring into its primitive form, and comparing this form with its latest expression. The element of truth in this view is, that we are often enabled to separate the

adventitious elements which attach to a principle by going back to its beginnings and tracing the process by which it has developed. A principle, on its first enunciation, may be said to embrace in confused fulness more than can be formulated at any stage short of the last ; which virtually means more than can ever be worked out into absolute clearness and definiteness. The truth, however, is that this fulness is to the originator of the idea merely implicit, and that without the subsequent development it would not have for us the significance which it actually has. The meaning of Christianity is best discovered by asking what influence it has had in successive periods of human history, and what is its influence to-day. Every age has its own problems ; and though in a sense we inherit all the problems of the past, yet the process of evolution has prepared for us the special problem which it is our task to solve. Our problem seems to me to be this : to determine the form which the principle of Christianity must take in view of the present state of science, art, morality, and social organization. To evade the complexity of the problem, as Harnack does, by setting up a half-mythical "essence" of Christianity, will not satisfy a critical age like ours. At the same time, I should not for a moment undervalue the important work which our author has done in throwing light upon the history of religious thought : what I deprecate is his attempt, under the guise of a historical problem, to withdraw religion from the realm of philosophical criticism. It is vain to deny the force of Kant's remark, that "when religion seeks to shelter itself behind its sanctity, it justly awakens suspicion against itself, and loses its claim to the sincere respect which reason yields only to that which has been able to bear the test of its free and open scrutiny."

## 184 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Perhaps the view I have been trying to indicate may be made clearer by a consideration of Harnack's picture of the early history of Christianity. In a passage already quoted he tells us that "Jesus Christ and his disciples were situated in their day just as we are situated in ours ; that is to say, their feelings, their thoughts, their judgments, and their efforts were bounded by the horizon and the framework in which their own nation was set and by its condition at the time." The "Kingdom of God" was for Jesus, on the one hand, a future Apocalyptic reign of God on earth, and, on the other hand, a purely spiritual regeneration, already begun in the hearts of believers ; and between these two poles his thoughts and feelings revolved. "Jesus, like all those of his own nation who were really in earnest, was profoundly conscious of the great antithesis between the kingdom of God and that kingdom of the world in which he saw the reign of evil and the evil one. . . . He was certain that the kingdom of the world must perish and be destroyed." There must, therefore, be a battle. But the triumph of the kingdom of God was assured and imminent, and when it should come Jesus saw himself "seated at the right hand of his Father, and his twelve disciples on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel ; so objective was this picture to him, so completely in harmony with the ideas of his time." But while Jesus undoubtedly shared with his contemporaries this idea of the two kingdoms of God and the devil, of their conflicts and of the future last conflict, in which the devil, after having long before been driven out of heaven, will be finally overcome on earth, it is a great mistake to look upon this idea as the main import of his teaching : what was really characteristic was the other view, that the kingdom of God "cometh not with observation," that it is

already here. The parables show that "the kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his soul and laying hold of it. True, the kingdom of God is the rule of God ; but it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals : *it is God himself in his power.* From this point of view everything that is dramatic in the external and historical sense has vanished."<sup>1</sup>

This view of the consciousness of Jesus is shared by critics who do not sympathize with Harnack's conception of theology. Thus his colleague, Professor Pfleiderer, says : "Jesus undeniably shared the Apocalyptic belief of his time of the near end of the present age of the world, and the dawn of a new supernatural age (*aiών οὐτος, aiών μέλλων*) ; and to this *eschatological supernaturalism* logically corresponded his *ethical supernaturalism*—that is, the ascetic requirement of the not merely internal, but also external, renunciation of all that belongs to the present age, of goods and chattels, of family and calling, of friendship and fatherland."<sup>2</sup> Without attempting to determine upon the historical accuracy of the contention that Jesus presented his gospel in the form of the Apocalyptic belief of his time, we have to ask whether this belief must be regarded as inseparable from Christianity. Harnack, as we have seen, answers in the negative, maintaining that Christianity consists in what was characteristic of the teaching of Jesus, not in what he shared in common with his contemporaries.

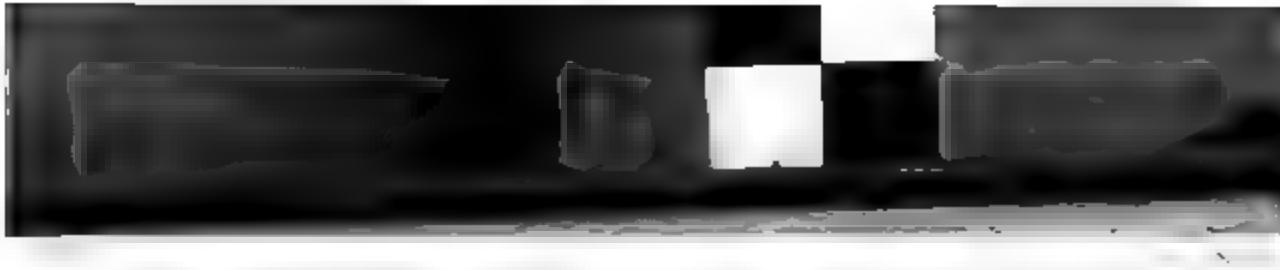
Now, while we must grant that Christianity cannot be identified with what is held by some thinkers to have been its first form, in which it included the belief in "a new supernatural age" (to use Pfleiderer's words),

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's *What is Christianity?* pp. 53-56.

<sup>2</sup> Pfleiderer's *Philosophy and Development of Religion*, ii. pp. 101-2.

## 186 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

we cannot admit that it may be identified with an immediate feeling in the soul of the individual. We can no longer accept the idea of "a new supernatural age," because the actual course of history has shown that the belief in the near end of the world and the dawn of "a new supernatural age" was not realized ; and, still more, just because the recognition of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God is one of the most assured results of the long toil of the Christian centuries. But while this is true, it seems to me none the less true, that Christianity cannot be separated from the total conception of things which experience and reflection compel us to adopt. If its truth were dependent upon the form in which it is believed by Harnack to have been first enunciated, there would be no alternative for us of these latter days but to reject it as obsolete and incredible. For, nothing is more certain than that no form of religion which is based upon an interruption of the regular course of nature is now credible. Hence Christianity, if it is to survive, must be compatible with the fullest recognition of the reign of law. It is thus obvious that the form which it assumes in our day cannot possibly be identical with what is maintained to have been its primitive form : in other words, that it must be regarded as participating in that process of evolution which applies to the whole history of man. On the other hand, the history of religion cannot be a mere succession of disconnected changes ; there must be some permanent element which guarantees its continuity. Nor can this element be viewed as simply something which in all changes remains the same : a dead cold identity with no principle of life in it ; it must be that which maintains itself in and through change. Now, if we wish to tell what in any case



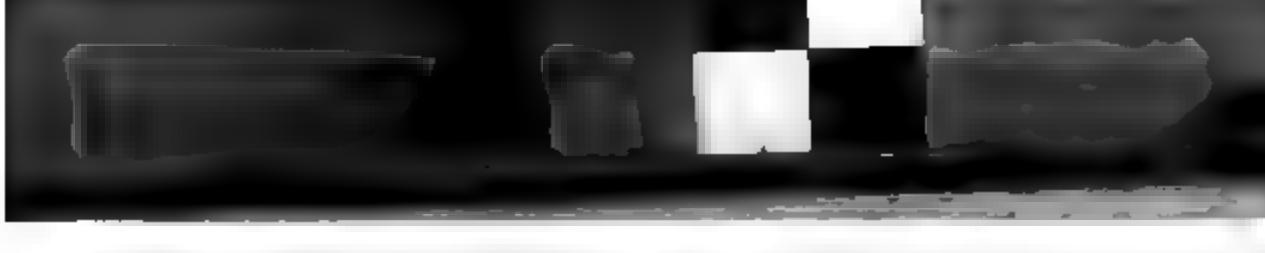
## CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY 187

a living principle is, we must look to the end as well as to the beginning. "The child is father of the man," as Wordsworth says; but what the child is can only be learned by looking at the man, and viewing the child in the light of what is thus revealed. Similarly, if we wish to learn what Christianity is, we must ask what it is now, after the lapse of nineteen centuries, and only then can we tell what was wrapped up in its first form. Moreover, the Christianity of our day must be consistent with the highest products of reflection. We cannot now adopt in reference to it a view of history which has been exploded in other spheres; we cannot believe that there are cataclysms in the realm of spirit, any more than in the realm of nature. There are no breaks in the life of humanity any more than in the external world. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven must consist in the development of goodness in and through the ordinary processes by which man is ever realizing his ideals. And this spiritual development is not something which goes on in isolation, having no relation to the other phases of human life, but must be the higher spirit of the whole process. Hence, just as there was a primitive view of human history and of nature, so there is a modern view which Christianity must incorporate on pain of extinction.

Is such an incorporation possible? I believe it is, if we only distinguish, as we ought to do, between a set of specific beliefs and a living principle. The specific beliefs of the first age of Christianity have necessarily passed away, and become incredible; and they have done so, because they represented an early phase in the history of humanity. But, though they are no longer credible in their original form, the principle which animated them is not dead. Religion is not something accidental to man, but something

## 188 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

inseparable from his rational life. It is that undying and inextinguishable faith in the divine, the denial of which is ultimately the destruction of all other beliefs. The Christian religion must therefore base its claim to acceptance upon its power of inspiring and satisfying this fundamental need of humanity. Now, when we direct our attention to the teaching of Jesus as set forth in the Gospels, we find in it, besides the Apocalyptic belief in the dawn of a supernatural age, a belief in God as love and in the principle that the key to all conduct is, "Die to live." These two beliefs are inseparably intertwined, so that to deny either is to deny both. But surely we may admit, that, fundamental and absolute as they are, they yet stand in need of further definition. The teaching of Jesus was based upon his direct intuitions, not upon a process of scientific ratiocination ; and while these may fairly claim to rest upon a foundation that cannot be shaken, it is only by the whole teaching of experience, and by the combined labours of the race, that they can yield up the whole of their meaning. In this process there is no doubt a certain danger : the danger that the reflective formulation should miss their full meaning, or should be regarded as a substitute for personal experience of their power. This, however, is a danger which not only cannot be avoided, but the avoidance of which would impoverish religious experience itself. Hence, instead of taking refuge from doubt in the undeveloped intuitions of Jesus, as Harnack does, we must in these days, if we are to place our faith in Christianity on impregnable grounds, develop them in the light of the best thought of our day into a full and complete system, which shall ignore no established result of science and no lesson of history.



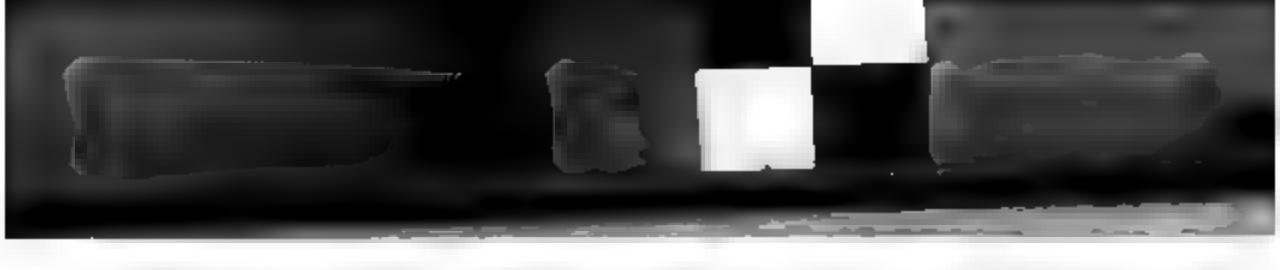
## CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY 189

For the Apocalyptic view, which critics tell us Jesus shared with his contemporaries, we must substitute a fully reasoned system or philosophy of religion. So only can we hope to retain our faith without doing violence to our reason, and our reason without sacrifice of our faith.

## LECTURE EIGHTH

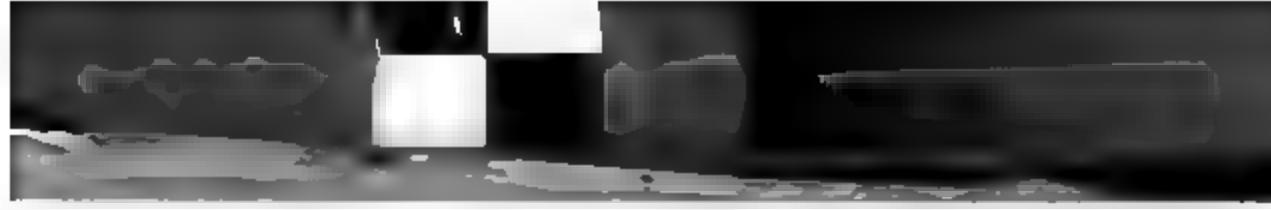
### PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN my last lecture, Harnack's "What is Christianity?" was taken as an instance of the doctrine which attaches pre-eminent importance to the personal aspect of religion. Since the days of Schleiermacher there has been an influential school of theologians who have sought to escape from the cramping influence of the traditional creed by making a fresh appeal to the religious experience of the individual. To this school belonged Ritschl, who may be regarded as the teacher of Harnack. It is held by the latter that "the Christian religion is something simple and sublime; it means one thing and one thing only: Eternal life in the midst of time by the strength and under the eyes of God." The essence of all religion is to be found in Jesus Christ and his Gospel, though we must also listen to the first generation of his disciples, and take account of the rekindling again and again of the spiritual life which has burned in all his followers. Religion is not a matter of doctrine, but a life; and "life cannot be spanned by general conceptions." The business of the historian is to find out what is common to all the forms which the Christian ideas have taken, corrected by reference to the Gospel, and conversely the chief



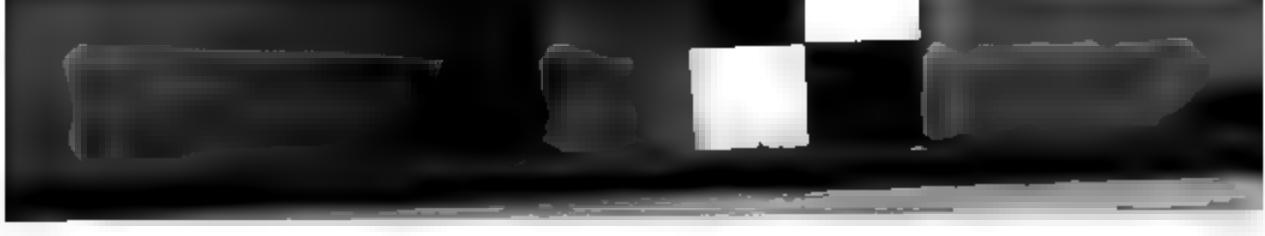
## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 191

features of the Gospel, corrected by reference to history. Thus we may recover the divine lineaments of Christianity, and find in it nourishment for our higher life. The Gospel consists in the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God as present here and now; of God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul to Him and to itself; of the higher righteousness and the new commandment of love. In those truths is contained the whole of Christianity, while the history of Dogma is a record of the progressive obscuration of the truth by Hellenic philosophy and other "secularizing" influences. What lends force to this view of Harnack is the undeniable distinction between religion and theology or the philosophy of religion. But though religion is not philosophy, it does not follow either that it can exist without all "general conceptions" or that philosophy must distort or annihilate it. A being of pure intellect is no doubt a fiction, but so also is a religious being who is merely sentient. If it is said that the consciousness of God as Father is a concrete experience, while thought works with abstractions, the answer is that in one sense the conception of God is more concrete than the ordinary consciousness of God, because the former explicitly embraces all possible reality within itself, whereas the latter represents Him in a pictorial way and therefore as finite. Harnack's mistake is to identify the absence of explicit conception in the religious consciousness with the absence of all conception. On the other hand, religion cannot be identified with the intellectual comprehension of the divine, because, as a response of the whole man, it involves the indissoluble union of thought, feeling, and will. This is what gives plausibility to the contention that religion may exist independently of all



## 192 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

conceptions; a view which, if it were sound, would put the lowest form of religion on the same level as the highest. When we penetrate to man's real beliefs, it becomes evident that the minimum of religion is faith in the divine, and such a faith is possible only to one who conceives of the universe as rational. This is virtually admitted by Harnack himself when he holds that belief in the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man is the essence of Christianity. We cannot, however, grant that there is an unchangeable "kernel" of religion: for, as man develops, his whole nature develops, and therefore the religious consciousness becomes ever more complex. While its principle is no doubt ever the same, it is not a dead unchanging identity, but continually grows by the very energy which enables it to assimilate new forms of experience. In order to exhibit this process in its actual operation, I propose, in the present and the following lecture, to consider the relation of Philo to the writers of the New Testament, and in two subsequent lectures to indicate the struggle of the principle of Christianity with Greek philosophy, as represented by the Gnostics; following up these studies with a statement of the phases of faith through which Augustine passed and a critical estimate of his theology; continuing with a short consideration of medieval theology, as embodied in the teachings of Thomas Aquinas; and ending with a statement and criticism of Leibnitz as an exponent of Protestant Theology. This historical course will bring us back to the point from which we started in our third lecture, and prepare the way for a final determination, in the two last lectures, of the relations of God, the world and man, as conceived by the form of Idealism advocated in these pages.



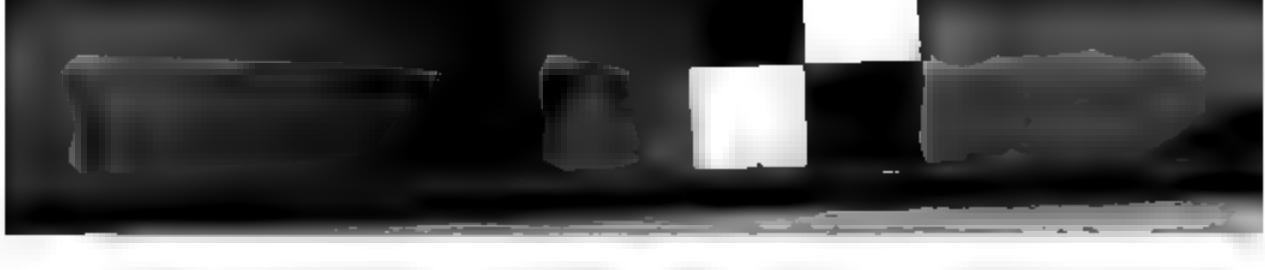
## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 193

How far, if at all, can the method and the ideas of Philo be said to have influenced the New Testament? Both of these questions are surrounded with difficulty. Philo is not a pure philosopher of the type of Plato and Aristotle: he does not attempt to construct a system of thought on the basis of reason, but starts from certain preconceptions, which determine the character of his thought. Nor has he elaborated a philosophical system of his own, after a critical investigation of the doctrines of his predecessors, but has taken from them whatever ideas seemed to fit in with his general conception of things. The result is that he presents us with an eclectic philosophy, which rather contains a number of suggestions that, after much critical labour, might be developed into a system, than what can be called a philosophy. It might, perhaps, be said that Philo, in thus sitting loose to any hard and fast system, is only exhibiting the true philosophical temper, which refuses to admit that any given doctrine sums up the whole body of truth, and that he is to be commended, instead of condemned, for his contempt of system-mongering. The defence seems to me to be based upon a misunderstanding of the true function of philosophy. If we compare the method of Philo with one of the great masters of speculation, we shall see that his eclecticism is a mark, not of strength, but of weakness. Aristotle, for example, everywhere shows an accurate acquaintance with the thought of his predecessors and contemporaries. It is his custom to begin the discussion of any topic by citing the current views in regard to it, and then going on to consider the doctrines of the philosophers. This method he follows under the conviction that no belief has been held by man that does not contain some rational element which has

## 194 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

commended it to the minds of those who held it. But Aristotle is also convinced that those views are only partial aspects of a more comprehensive truth ; and therefore he makes it his main point to discover what that truth is. This is not the method of Philo. He starts with the assumption that Moses, whom he assumes to have been the author of the Pentateuch, was the possessor of all truth ; and, under this preconception, he proceeds to find in the words of Moses whatever truth he seems to have discovered from any source. The result of course is that he is forced to read into scripture a meaning which it does not possess, so that its plain and simple sense is overlaid with the ideas of his own time. Similarly, he reads the Greek philosophers, not with the object of finding out what they really meant, or of discovering the element of truth which they had grasped, but as witnesses for ideas which belonged to the age in which he lived. \ Thus, Philo never comes into direct contact with the minds of sacred or profane writers at all, but approaches them with *a priori* conceptions of what they ought to have said. Of course this criticism is not meant as a charge against Philo : he was simply following the method of his time, and could not do otherwise ; but, in attempting to determine his personal value and influence, we have to bear in mind the character of his mind and the limitations of his age. Especially, in attempting to estimate his influence upon Christian thought, we must have a perfectly clear idea of the fundamental defect of his method. Christian writers of the early centuries borrowed the method of Philo, and even in our own day there are theologians who have not shaken off its influence.

\ When we come to enquire whether Philo has



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 195

influenced the writers of the New Testament, a problem of great difficulty immediately presents itself. The influence of one writer upon another cannot be directly inferred from the use of common terms, or a similarity of ideas or expressions. For, two writers may be entirely independent of each other, and may yet express themselves in an almost identical way. There are terms and ideas which belong to the atmosphere of an age; they have come, no one knows whence, and have become the symbols of current modes of thought. We do not, for example, prove that the writer of the fourth Gospel borrowed from Philo, because both speak of the Λόγος as a manifestation of God. We are safe in saying that the term belonged to the age, but not that the one writer borrowed from the other. Fortunately, the question is of less importance than some writers seem to imagine. Suppose it were proved that St. John adopted the term Λόγος from Philo, and was even influenced by Philo's doctrine of the Λόγος, the main point is whether both writers attach the same meaning to the term. As we shall see, this is by no means the case; and, though historical curiosity would fain be satisfied, in the development of ideas the question is of very subordinate interest. No one will now maintain that the truth of the Λόγος doctrine as held by St. John is dependent upon the writer not having been influenced by Philo; for, however he may have been influenced, he employed it to formulate a new idea, which came into the world only with Christianity.

I have mentioned two difficulties which confront any one who seeks to explain the doctrine of Philo and to estimate his influence. There is another difficulty, which arises from the general character of human progress. Philo presupposes two independent lines of

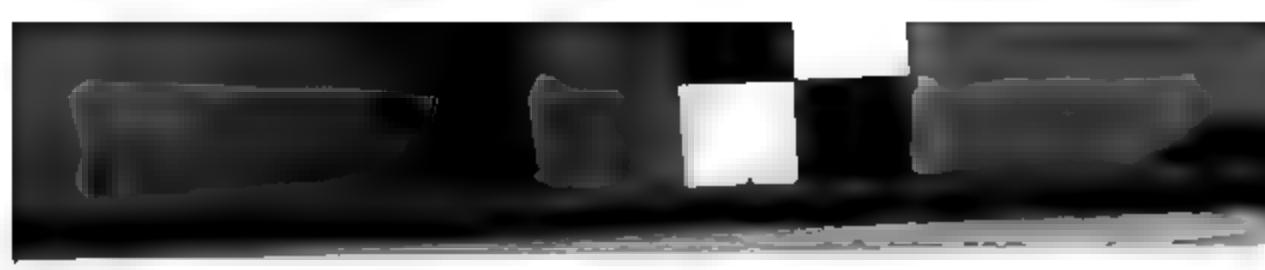
## 196 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

development, the Jewish and the Greek. He is thus connected, on the one hand with Jewish, and on the other hand with Greek thought, and it is impossible to understand him fully without some reference to both. Now, it is obviously impossible to treat fully of either; and the most that I can pretend to do is to indicate, as we proceed, the relation of particular ideas to these two lines of development. Without more preamble, I shall attempt to convey some idea of part of Philo's *De Mundi Opificio*, as the handiest way of getting an insight into the circle of ideas within which this expositor of Hellenistic Judaism lived and moved.<sup>1</sup>

Philo begins his treatise on the "Creation of the World" by drawing a strong contrast between Moses and other legislators. The first thing to be observed is Philo's belief that the Mosaic writings contain a complete revelation of God, and are absolutely true even in the most minute particular. The Law of Moses is therefore unchangeable and eternal, and will remain as long as the sun and moon and the universe endure. Nor is it merely the Hebrew scriptures which are thus inspired, but the same authority attaches to the Septuagint. No scribe of the straitest sect of the Pharisees had a more implicit faith than Philo in the inspiration of every word and even letter of scripture.

Since the Mosaic writings, on his view, contain a final revelation of the nature of God and His relation to the world, it follows that they contain all truth, and hence that whatever is true can be extracted from a careful consideration of what they affirm. The distinction between religious and scientific truth, which

<sup>1</sup> The exposition which follows should be compared with the "Extracts from Philo" contained in the Appendix at the end of the volume.

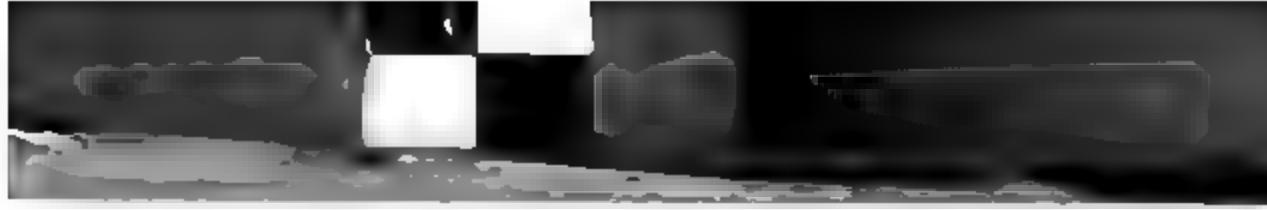


## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 197

many liberal theologians now make, was one which did not occur to Philo, and which, if it had been presented to him, he would have summarily rejected as impious. As the passage just referred to shows, it is precisely the "philosophical" character of the Mosaic writings which, in his view, constitutes their superiority to all other writings. For Philo the Pentateuch is not merely an expression of the religious consciousness, but a philosophical system, in which each part is set forth with a view to the other parts; in other words, the Bible is not merely a record of religious experience, but a theology. In Philo's hands, in fact, it becomes almost entirely a theology, even the narrative parts being regarded as part of a system of general conceptions. With this method of dealing with Scripture we are only too familiar, and it was mainly through Philo's example and influence that it became the favourite method of Christian writers, and has survived down to our own day.

The first class of legislators contrasted with Moses are those who simply state ethical principles without showing the basis upon which they depend. We may express Philo's meaning by saying that morality must be based upon religion. When moral precepts are laid down without being shown to flow from the relation of God to the world, and especially to man, it is not seen that the rational nature of man demands something more than external commands. It is for this reason, he holds, that Moses begins by revealing the nature of God, and thus prepares the minds of men for a joyous obedience to the laws.

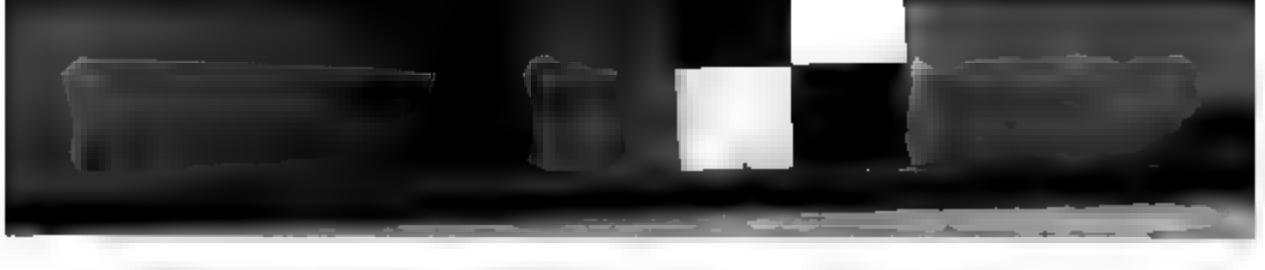
The second class of lawgivers are those who do, indeed, attempt to exhibit the divine nature, but distort it by the invention of myths, which give a false idea of God. To Philo a myth is simply a deliberate attempt



## 198 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

to impose upon the credulous masses. It is significant that Philo, while he here supposes that he is following his favourite philosopher, Plato, in reality displays a different spirit. To Plato, and even more to Aristotle, a myth was a "noble lie": it was the first attempt of the human mind to grasp the divine nature; and though Plato criticises the myths of his country, he is willing to allow that myths may be made an important instrument in the education of the young. Aristotle, again, finds in mythology an implicit philosophy; so that the mythologist, as he says, is in a sense a philosopher.<sup>1</sup> Philo has not this wide range of sympathy. As a Jew he can see in the myths of polytheistic religions nothing but a false representation of the one invisible God. If it is asked how Philo, familiar as he was with the anthropomorphic representation of God found in the Pentateuch, was not able to find an element of truth in Greek and Oriental mythologies, the answer is that he spiritualized these sayings, and thus eliminated from them the obnoxious element. He therefore distinguishes between allegory and mythology. He admits that, in the Pentateuch, there are things "more incredible than myths" (*De Mose*, iii. 691); but the incredibility arises from interpreting literally what was meant by the writer to be understood in an allegorical sense. To suppose that God really planted fruit trees in Paradise, when no one was allowed to live there, and when it would be impious to fancy that He required them for Himself, is "great and incurable silliness." The reference must, therefore, be to the paradise of virtues, with their appropriate actions, implanted by God in the soul (*De Plan. Noe*, 8. 9). The objections of cavillers are set aside by a similar process. There are those who sneer

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysics*, A 2, 982<sup>b</sup> 18: ὁ φιλόσοφος φιλόσοφός τότε ἐστι.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 199

at the story of the tower of Babel, and think it parallel to Homer's tale about Pelion, Ossa, and Olympus. "The true interpretation is that which sees in the account a portrayal of the universal nature and course of wickedness" (*De Conf. Linguar.* I ff.). This allegorical method of interpretation is so imbedded in the writings of Philo, from whom it spread to the Fathers of the Church, that it may be well to say a few words about it.

The allegorical method was to a certain extent employed in the Palestinian schools, but it had its origin in Greece, and was borrowed by later Græco-Jewish writers. The reverence for antiquity and the belief in inspiration imparted to the writings of the ancient poets a unique value. Thus, Homer became the Bible of the Greek races, and was sometimes regarded not only as inspired but as divine. With the rise of philosophic reflection, Homer was held to contain a full system of philosophy. As new ideas took possession of men's minds, the only method of reconciliation that seemed satisfactory was to give a symbolical interpretation to passages which offended the moral sense. This method was aided by the concomitant development of the mysteries, in which the history of the Gods was represented by symbolical actions. In the fifth century B.C. the allegorical interpretation began to be applied to ancient literature. Thus, Hecataeus explained the story of Cerberus by the existence of a poisonous snake found in a cavern on the headland of Tænaron. Anaxagoras found in Homer a symbolical account of the movements of mental powers and moral virtues: Zeus was mind, Athene was art. His disciple Metrodorus treated Homeric stories as a symbolical representation of physical phenomena. "The gods were the powers

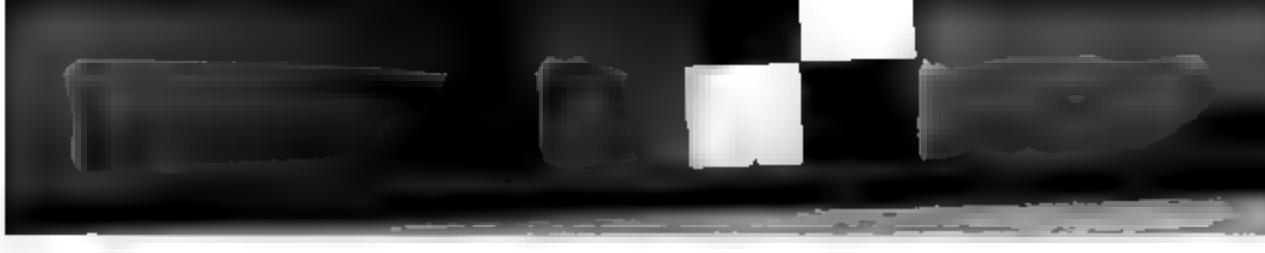
## 200 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of nature: their gatherings, their movements, their loves, and their battles, were the play and interaction and apparent strife of natural forces."<sup>1</sup>

Now, the same difficulty which had been felt in the Greek world in regard to Homer was felt by the Jews who had studied Greek philosophy in regard to the Pentateuch. Hence, in Philo's time the allegorical method had attained a firm footing among Græco-Jewish writers. In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, it is said that Wisdom, at the time of the Exodus, led the Israelites in a wonderful path, "and became to them a shelter by day and a flame of stars by night." Here the pillar of cloud and of fire is allegorized as Wisdom. The writer, however, does not apply the method to the construction and proof of doctrines. But it was inevitable that a thinker like Philo should follow his favourite writers the Stoics, and interpret the sacred writings in terms of the philosophical doctrines which he had learned from his Greek teachers. In this way he was able to retain his belief in the absolute authority of Moses and at the same time to satisfy his intellect. But Philo lacks the keen insight of Plato and Aristotle, who rejected the symbolic interpretation of the poets, and was entirely unaware that he was reading into the sacred writings ideas that he had brought to them. The allegorical method, however, though it has obscured the deeper truth of the scriptures for centuries, was not without its value; for in no other way could the essential truth which they contained have been retained by an age that had advanced to a higher stage of development.

Philo, coming to the account of creation contained

<sup>1</sup> Hatch's *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, p. 61.



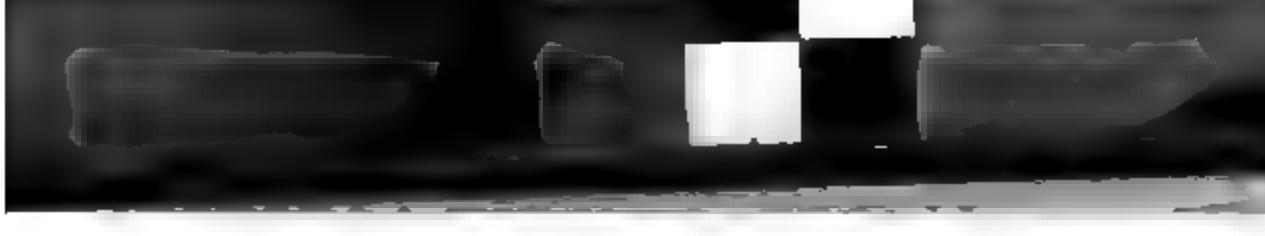
## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 201

in Genesis, proceeds to characterize it in terms borrowed from the Platonic philosophy. For Plato the true reality consisted in "ideas," which in the *Timaeus* he conceives as the thoughts of God as they existed in the divine mind before the creation of the world. This is the aspect of the Platonic ideas upon which Philo naturally fastened, because it best fitted in with his general conception of the transcendence of God and His relation to the visible universe. As we shall immediately see more fully, the world first exists as a connected system of ideas in the divine intelligence, and this system is then impressed upon the visible creation, which Philo conceives as distinct and separate from the system of ideas,—the *κόσμος νοητός*, as he usually calls it. We can easily understand how a mind like Philo's, filled with the Jewish conception of God as transcending all finite existence, found in the Platonic conception of archetypal ideas a philosophical expression for the relation between God and the world. The creation he therefore conceived, not as a manifestation of God Himself, but as the product of His creative power and wisdom, exhibiting traces of its divine model in the same way as a building or statue is the outward realization of ideas previously existing in the mind of the architect or sculptor. It is worthy of remark that, in thus assimilating Jewish and Greek ideas, Philo is unconsciously transforming the distinctively Jewish conception of God. When the creation of the world is assimilated to the product of human art, the conception of God is not that of a Creator, but of a Divine Architect, who fashions a material already existing. That this idea lay at the basis of Philo's thought is proved by the fact that, as we shall see, he regards matter, not as created but as eternal. Now, this is not the Jewish idea of

## 202 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

creation ; nor can it be legitimately extracted from the Mosaic account. In Genesis the world is conceived to spring into being as a whole at the word of God, and to depend for its continued existence upon His will. What He has summoned into being He may at a word annihilate. Philo, overmastered by the Greek conception of God, not as the *creator*, but as the *former* of the world, is naturally led to read the scriptural account of creation as if it was the account of the fashioning of an ordered world out of a pre-existent material. Thus the Greek conception triumphs over the Jewish, though of this Philo was entirely unconscious. It is therefore not without significance that he speaks of the "beauty" (*κάλλος*) of the world ; for "beauty," as conceived by the Greek mind, consisted in the order and harmony presented in visible forms.

This beauty, Philo tells us, cannot be expressed in human language ; yet he believes that it was apprehended by Moses, who was directly inspired by God ; and, in certain exceptional cases, the vision of the divine nature is permitted to those who attain the state of ecstasy, in which the limitations of the ordinary consciousness are transcended. This higher vision of God is indeed the goal of wisdom, which may be attained by those who love God. In a sense, therefore, Philo claimed that inspiration is possible for all men. "Every good and wise man has the gift of prophecy, while it is impossible for the wicked man to become an interpreter of God"; and he tells us that sometimes "a more solemn word" spoke from his own soul, and he ventured to write down what it said to him. "I am not ashamed," he says, "to relate the way in which I am myself affected, which I know I have experienced countless times. Intending sometimes to come to my usual occupation of writing



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 203

the doctrines of philosophy, and having seen exactly what I ought to compose, I have found my mind fruitless and barren, and left off without accomplishing anything, reproaching my mind with its self-conceit, and amazed at the power of *Him who is*, by whom it has turned out that the wombs of the soul are opened and closed. But sometimes, having come empty, I suddenly became full, ideas being invisibly showered upon me and planted from above, so that by a divine possession I was filled with enthusiasm, and was absolutely ignorant of the place, of those present, of myself, of what was said, of what was written; for I had a stream of interpretation, an enjoyment of light, a most keen-scented vision, a most distinct view of the subjects treated, such as would be given through the eyes from the clearest exhibition of an object."<sup>1</sup> But, while he thus claimed inspiration for all "good men," he "ascribed to the biblical writers, and especially to Moses, a fulness of this divine enthusiasm, and consequent infallibility of utterance, which he claimed for no others."<sup>2</sup> For this reason the Mosaic account of creation is to be accepted with implicit faith, though it can only be truly understood by one who shares in a measure the vision of God.

Before going on to interpret the Mosaic account of creation, Philo sets aside certain false views which have been held as to the origin of the world.

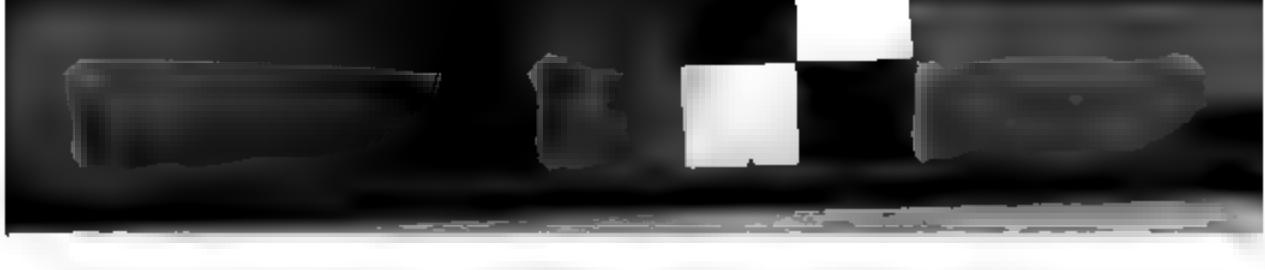
He rejects the doctrine of the eternity of the world, which was the prevalent view of the Greek poets and philosophers, maintaining that it could neither exist nor continue but for the productive and providential activity of God. We must be careful, however, not to assume that Philo maintains the doctrine of the absolute origination of all things out of nothing. True

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Drummond's *Philo-Judaeus*, pp. 14-15.      <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

## 204 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

to his conception of God as the supreme architect of the world, he regards formless matter as uncreated. What he rejects is the doctrine that from all eternity there existed a "cosmos"—a definitely formed or ordered world ; which, indeed, was the view of Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> To affirm that the ordered world always existed is, he argues, the same thing as saying that it is independent of God. Such a doctrine therefore denies the "activity" of God and removes the world beyond His "providence" (*πρόνοια*). The basis of Philo's argument is that the orderly arrangement of the world can only be explained as due to the formative activity of God. Adopting the analogy of a human artificer, he conceives of this active or shaping cause as presupposing an unformed matter upon which it operates. Here, therefore, we have the famous argument from design, which has played so important a part in subsequent theological speculation. It must be said, in favour of Philo, that he has a clearer conception of the argument than some of his Christian successors ; he sees that it leads to the idea of God as the supreme architect, not to the conception of a Creator, and therefore he consistently maintains the eternity of matter. On the other hand, he is entirely unconscious that, in thus setting up two opposite principles, he has logically denied the absoluteness of God. For him, God is a Being beyond the world, and complete in Himself. How God can be absolute, while yet there exists independently of Him an eternal "matter," he never seems to have asked. The absoluteness of God he accepted as a religious belief and he conjoins with it the Greek idea of a separate "matter," not seeing that the two ideas are mutually exclusive. Coming to the study of scripture with this preconception, he attributes

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Aristotle's *De Cœlo*, i. 10.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 205

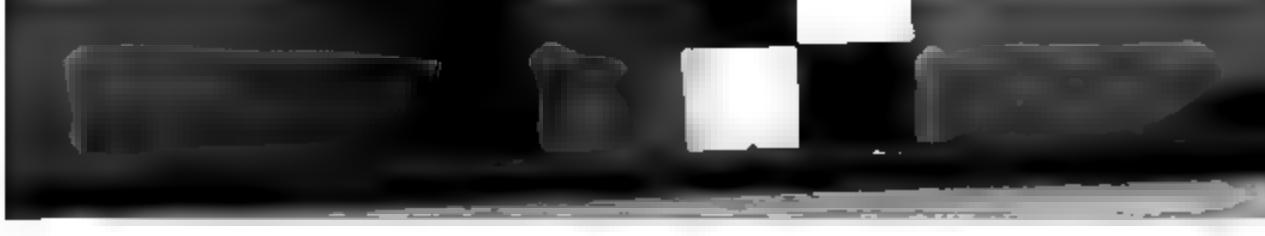
the same inconsistency to Moses. When he read that "the spirit of God moved upon the water," he interpreted this as meaning that God acted upon unformed matter. The same view had already been suggested in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, where the writer, speaking of the miracles wrought at the time of the Exodus, says that "the whole creation in its own kind was again impressed anew." "This language suggests the comparison of matter to a lump of wax, which is capable of receiving the impression of various seals. Thus the conversion of chaos into cosmos is the author's highest idea of creation." Philo was, therefore, in his doctrine of the formation of the world out of a primeval "matter," adopting a view which, under the influence of Greek ideas, had probably in his day become a received tenet; and it is quite in accordance with his general want of independence and originality, that he should have accepted it without seeing its incompatibility with his Jewish belief in the absolute-ness of God.

Philo has another reason for denying the eternity of the world. If the world is eternal it is self-subsistent; and this is the same as saying that it is not subject to the providence of God,—a doctrine which is subversive of all religion. The visible world is in continual process or genesis, and therefore it cannot be self-subsistent. It is thus presupposed by Philo that eternity and process are mutually incompatible ideas. Accordingly, he draws a strong contrast between the ideal world, which is eternal and unchangeable, and the sensible world, which is never the same at two successive moments. Whatever comes into being presupposes that which does not come into being. This is the argument afterwards elaborated as what Kant calls the cosmological argument, or more popularly the argument

## 206 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

from the finite and changeable to a first cause. In Philo's hands, it implies an absolute distinction between the ideal and the sensible world ; and thus leads to the difficulty how there can be any contact between two realms which are conceived as the opposite of each other. How Philo seeks to bridge the gulf we shall immediately see. Meanwhile, let us consider the manner in which he extracts from the Mosaic account of creation his own doctrine of the separate existence of an ideal or intelligible world.

In his manner of doing so we have an instance of the method by which he imposes upon the text a sense entirely foreign to it. The plain and simple meaning of the scriptural account of creation is that the world was brought into existence in six natural days. In modern times the futile attempt has been made to show that by "days" was meant "periods of time." This thoroughly false method of exegesis is based upon the same assumption as that which led to Philo's extravagances—the assumption that the cosmology of Genesis must be absolutely true. In our day the difficulty arising from this untenable view has been that it contradicts the established results of science. There is no escape from the quagmire of artificial interpretation except by the frank recognition that the scriptural account is simply a primitive attempt to construct a cosmology, which cannot now be accepted. Nor can we find any satisfactory way out of the difficulty by saying that, while the cosmogony is unsatisfactory as a scientific theory, the conception of God which it reveals to us is beyond cavil. The conception of God contained in the Old Testament is not adequate. If it were, the new revelation of God's nature given in Christianity would be superfluous. The difficulty can only be overcome by the application of the idea of



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 207

development. The Jewish conception of God is the highest point reached prior to Christianity, but it has been superseded by the fuller conception expressed by our Lord; and it is a serious practical question whether it is justifiable to cover up so palpable a truth by vague phrases about the sublimity of the Hebrew conception of God.

Philo's difficulty did not spring from the discrepancy between his scientific and theological beliefs ; for there was nothing in the science of his day to give him pause. His problem was to retain the philosophical conception of God which he had formed by an amalgam of Jewish and Greek ideas. His great difficulty was that the scriptural account of creation seemed to be infected with an untenable anthropomorphism. It represented God, after the manner of man, as limited by time, and passing in succession from one form of activity to another. This conception, as he thought, cannot be admitted, and therefore it cannot be what Moses meant. God is not such an one as ourselves : He does all things at once : there is no interval between His purpose to create, and the actual creation ; He does not first, as we do, frame a conception of what He will do, and then proceed to realize it in successive stages ; but by His mere thought the world is formed, and formed as a whole. The act of creation is therefore independent of time. What, then, is meant by saying that the world was made in six days ? By this we are to understand, not that the heavens were first created, but that the heavens are in the order of excellence the highest of all created things. The world as a whole is a "cosmos"—an ordered or organic system—in which each part, though in itself imperfect, contributes to the perfection of the whole. Now, Moses cannot have declared that the world was

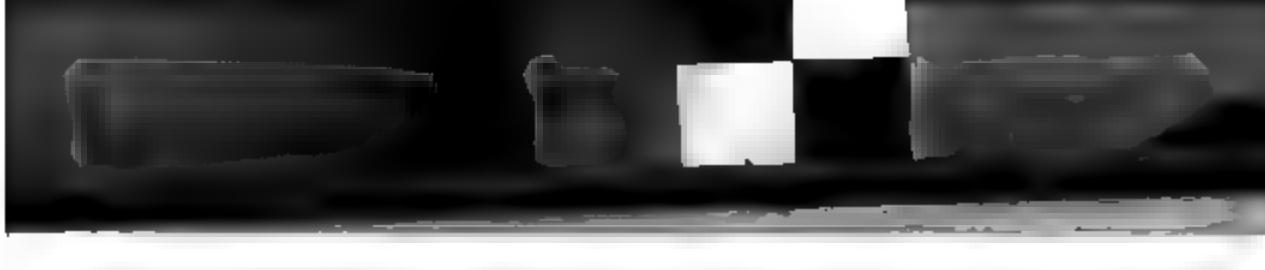
## 208 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

made in *six* days, without a deliberate purpose. Why *six* rather than any other number? Here Philo makes use of the Pythagorean doctrine of numbers, which in his day had again come into vogue by the influence of the Neo-Pythagoreans. According to them the number 6 has a productive or vital power ( $\psi\chiωσις$ ), being the product of 3, a male number, and of 2, a female number: and it is a "perfect" number, because it is the sum of its factors:  $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$ .

In the passage following we have a good instance of the manner in which Philo imposes upon the words of scripture a philosophical doctrine which was suggested to him by Plato. What we find in Genesis is the simple statement: "God called the light day, and the darkness he called night; and there was evening and there was morning, one day ( $\eta\muέpa μίa$ )."<sup>1</sup> But Philo is determined to find in scripture the distinction between the ideal and the sensible world, and therefore he fastens upon the words "one day," interpreting them as indicating, not the first day of the creation of the visible universe, but the unity of the ideal world. Besides, "one" is the "ideal" number, the prototype of all other numbers, but occupying a unique place. Further, Genesis speaks of the earth as "invisible and unformed" ( $\alphaόρατος καὶ ακατασκεύαστος$ ), which Philo takes to mean the ideal earth, as existing prior to the visible earth, i.e. as one of the ideas constituting the "ideal world" ( $κόσμος νοητός$ ). Who then, in the face of such strong evidence, could doubt that Moses, in his account of the first day of creation, was speaking of the creation of the ideal world!

The creation of the ideal world, then, was prior to the construction of the visible world. How Philo harmonized this temporal precedence of the ideal to

<sup>1</sup> See the "Extract from the Septuagint" in the Appendix.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 209

the real with his doctrine, that time has no existence prior to the origin of the visible universe, he does not tell us ; probably he would have said that we can only represent under the form of a temporal succession what is rather an order of dependence. But if he had followed out this line of thought, he must have seen that it was inconsistent with the very idea of a genesis in time of the world. If time begins with the existence of the visible universe, we cannot speak of a time prior to its existence. Philo, however, is not a clear or consistent thinker ; and therefore, while he separates the creation of the ideal world from the formation of the sensible world, he speaks of the former as prior to the latter.

The ideal world, which was first created by God, is the pattern or archetype of the sensible world, corresponding part for part with it. This conception is of course borrowed from Plato, who represents the ideas after this manner in the *Timaeus*, though he is not unaware that he is using a figure of speech, which must not be too closely pressed. Philo is very little disturbed by such considerations, and seems to have been perfectly satisfied with the analogy to a human artist who frames in his mind a general conception and then proceeds to translate it into a visible shape. Having formed in His mind the ideal world, God employed it as a model after which He constructed the visible world. We have therefore to imagine the unformed matter of the universe as already existing, and the divine Artificer as moulding it into a cosmos, as the sculptor moulds the block of marble. I shall not dwell upon the inadequacy of such a conception. It is enough to say that "matter," as an unformed independent substance, is an idea to which no intelligible meaning can be attached ; and that

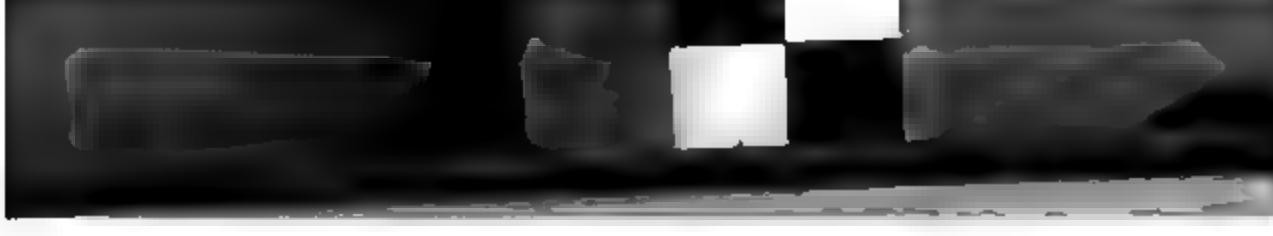
## 210 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

modern theology cannot take a single step without getting rid of this phantom.

As the ideal world is beyond and prior to the sensible world, so it has no local habitation. "Just as the idea of a city which he proposes to construct has no existence in space, but is stamped upon the soul of the architect, so the ideal world can have no other place than the divine intelligence ( $\lambdaόγος$ ), which gives order to the various ideas. For what other place can there be for the divine powers, which is capable of receiving and containing, I do not say all the powers, but any one of them in its purity?"

Still following the analogy of the human artificer and his work, Philo tells us that the ideal world has no local habitation. It may be that he was opposing the ordinary view of the Jews of his day that heaven had a definite position in some part of the spatial universe; in any case, he maintains that the ideas exist only in the divine mind. These ideas he also calls "powers," because they not only exist in the divine mind, but are an expression of the divine self-active reason.

We cannot, therefore, separate the divine powers from the divine ideas, or either from the divine Reason ( $\lambdaόγος$ ). The ideas, as we may say, are the eternal forms of God's self-activity. They proceed from God, in the sense that they are the modes which His eternal energy assumes. Philo, however, conceives of the self-active energy of God as existing prior to the formation of the visible world, for it is his view, as we have seen, that the ideal world exists prior to the generation of the sensible world, just as the artist frames a conception of the object which he proposes to bring into visible existence before he constructs it. No doubt Philo repeatedly warns us that we cannot comprehend the inner nature of the ideal world; but this warning is based upon his



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 211

assumption that God, as absolutely separated from the world, is incomprehensible. Because of this fundamental dualism, nothing was left for him but to take refuge in metaphor and analogy.

The divine "powers," of which Philo has previously spoken, constitute in their completeness the divine reason in its infinite perfection. The sensible world, on the other hand, bears the impress, not of the complete nature of God, but only of His goodness. The same thought had already been expressed in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. "The whole world is, in the sight of God, as a weight out of a balance, and as an early drop of dew when it has come down upon the earth." Possessing infinite power to carry out His purposes, God must have acted from love in creating the world, and this love must embrace all that is, for if God had hated anything He would not have made it. The conception of the goodness of God as the motive of creation Philo therefore borrowed from Jewish sources. No doubt Plato speaks of "the good" as the supreme idea, and identifies it with God; but by "the good" he means the total rational nature of the Divine Reality, not a limited manifestation of it. In this case, therefore, Philo's Jewish belief has overmastered his Greek training.

The world, then, exhibits the goodness or love of God, but it is not a complete expression of His goodness, much less of His infinite perfection. Apart from the action of God upon it, "matter" would have remained in its original state of chaos,—indeterminate, changeless, lifeless; but, as it is entirely passive, it is capable of being reduced to order, system, and harmony. Thus we can infer from the actual order of the visible universe that a divine formative activity has been applied to it. Nor has God been aided in the work of creation by any but Himself, for indeed prior to the creation there was

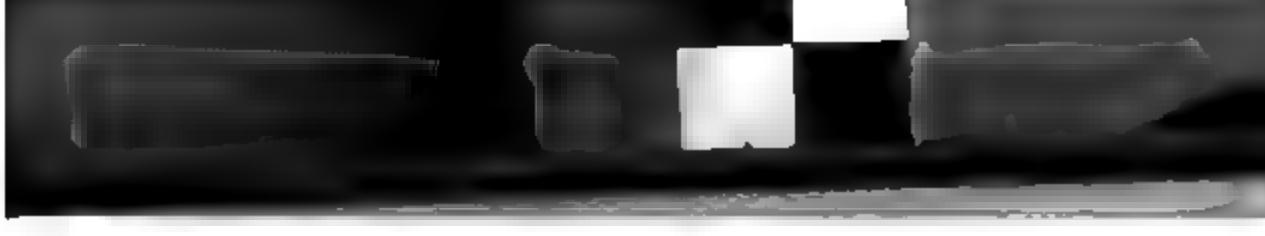
## 212 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

no other.<sup>1</sup> The love of God is infinite, but the finite is unable to receive all that God is willing to bestow, and would have sunk exhausted, had He not measured His bounty by the ability of each to receive it. This explains why the world does not fully express the absolute goodness of God. That the world is an imperfect copy of the ideal world Philo shows by an ingenious, but untenable, reading of scripture. Man, we are told, was "made after the image of God." This Philo does not understand in the plain and obvious sense that man shares in a measure the nature of God, but in the sense that man is a copy of the ideal man, which, like the whole ideal world, is a product of the Divine Reason. If man, who is only a part of the visible universe, is "made after the image of God," must we not conclude that the whole visible universe is a copy of the ideal universe? Thus Philo preserves the absoluteness and inscrutability of the divine nature, while seeming to explain the activity of God as impressed upon the visible universe.

Convinced that the account in Genesis of the first day of creation must refer to the origin, not of the sensible but of the ideal or intelligible world (*κόσμος νοητός*), Philo proceeds to show that from that account we may gain some idea of the various parts of this ideal world in the order of their rank.

Philo, as we have already seen, puts the creation of the ideal world out of time. "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth" means that, before the visible universe came into being, there already existed an ideal world which had no reality except in the divine mind. Time is the succession of states exhibited by the heavens in its revolution; and as

<sup>1</sup>This shows that, although Philo sometimes personifies the Logos, he conceived it as inseparable from God.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 213

there can be no motion prior to the thing moved, time or succession could not exist prior to the creation of the visible heavens. We cannot properly say that the sensible world was made in time, but only that time subsists through the sensible world. The heavens were made "first" in the sense that in the divine mind heaven is first in the order of thought, because the highest in rank. Such an order of subordination is, indeed, essential to the beauty of the ideal world. This distinction between the ideal world as eternal, and the sensible world as temporal, Philo borrowed from Plato, who distinguishes between infinite time, *aiών*, and originated time, *χρόνος* (*Tim.* 37 D), regarding the latter as dependent upon motion. Aristotle and the Stoics also connect time with motion, but they differ from Plato and Philo in regarding the world as eternal, and therefore time as also eternal.

So far by following Philo closely in his treatise on the creation of the world we have gained a fair idea of his exegetical method and a general outline of his philosophy. It will now be necessary to give a more summary statement of his system. We have seen that his ideas revolve about certain central points—the absoluteness of God, the divine Reason, the divine powers and ideas, the visible creation, including man, and its relation to God. These points we must now consider more in detail; and first as to the absoluteness of God.

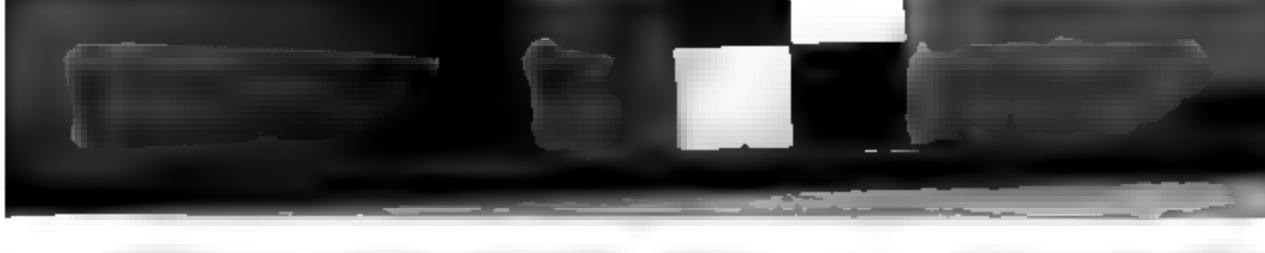
Philo affirms, in the most unqualified way, that it is absolutely impossible for man to know the inner nature of God. "The divine realm," he says, "is truly untrodden and unapproachable, nor is the purest understanding able to ascend even to such a height as to have a direct perception of the self-existent Being. When it is said that man cannot see the 'face' of God, this

## 214 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

is not to be taken literally, but is a figurative way of suggesting the absolutely pure and unmixed idea of the self-existent Being, because the peculiar nature and form of man is best known by his face. For God does not say, 'I am by nature invisible'—for who can be more visible than He who has originated all other visible things?—but He says, 'Though I am by nature visible, no man has seen me.' And the cause lies in the weakness of the creature. To speak plainly, we must become God—which is impossible—before we can comprehend God." Philo, then, maintained that the human mind is by its very nature for ever precluded from comprehending the inner nature of God: to know God as He is, we must be God. This does not mean that God is in His own nature incomprehensible: He is known to Himself as He truly is: but His very greatness makes it impossible that any finite being should comprehend Him.

This doctrine of the absolute incomprehensibility of God Philo finds in scripture. "In Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, we read: 'Behold, behold that I am, and there is no God beside me.' Now here, God does not say, 'Behold me'—for it is impossible for the creature at all to comprehend God in His inner being—but, 'Behold that I am,' i.e. contemplate my existence; for it is enough for human reason to attain to the knowledge that there is and exists a cause of the universe; and any attempt to go further and discover the essence or determinate nature of this cause is the source of all folly."

As God cannot be grasped by thought, so His nature cannot be expressed in human language: there is no name which is fitted to express that which is incomprehensible and therefore inexpressible. This also, Philo argues, is the doctrine of scripture. When



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 215

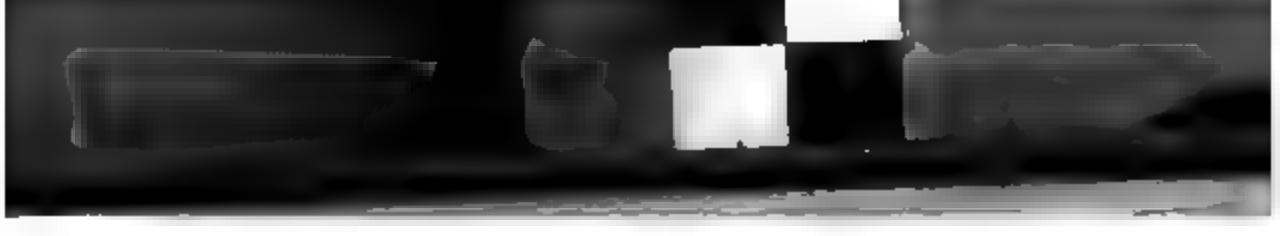
Moses asked by what name he should designate the Being who sent him, the divine answer was: "I am He who is" (*έγώ εἰμι ὁ ων*: Exod. iii. 14); which was equivalent to, "It is my nature to be, not to be named."

Since God is incomprehensible and inexpressible, He is without qualities (*άτοις*). "He who thinks that God has qualities," says Philo, "or that He is not one, or is not uncreated and imperishable, or is not immutable, injures himself, not God."

In thus removing God beyond the sphere of definite thought and speech, and denying that He has qualities, it was not Philo's intention to affirm that God is a purely abstract or indeterminate being; what he meant was that God was infinitely concrete, and hence cannot be characterized by any of the predicates which we apply to the finite. "It is impious," he says, "to think of anything as better than the cause of all things, since nothing is equal to Him, nothing a little lower, but everything after God is found to have descended by a whole genus." The distinction, in other words, between the Finite and Infinite is absolute, so that no predicate which we apply to the finite can be applied in the same sense to the Infinite; yet this is not because the Infinite contains less than the finite, but because it contains infinitely more. Here, in Philo, we have that curious alternation between the absolutely abstract and the absolutely concrete which was afterwards developed by Spinoza. This contradiction is smoothed over by the doctrine that the highest predicates which we apply to the absolute are merely "similitudes and forms"; they are the human symbols of what cannot be expressed adequately in language. How we can know that these predicates *are* symbols of what we do not know, Philo does not tell us; in truth, no solution of

## **216 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

the contradiction is possible, so long as the absolute incomprehensibility of God is maintained ; and we have therefore to fall back upon the compromise, which has again and again been called into service, that, while we do not know God, He gives us in the ideals that impress our souls an adumbration of His nature, which is enough to reveal to us how infinitely perfect He really is. Philo, therefore, allows himself to characterize God by these highest predicates. God is primarily the self-determining Reason, the first cause of the universe. Hence, He must be conceived as "the uncreated and eternal cause of all things." He is also absolutely one and indivisible, the archetypal unity. "Though existing outside of the creation, He has none the less filled the world with Himself;" but He does so, not because He is diffused through space and time—for He is above both—but because the influence of His creative will is manifested in every part of creation. And, as we have already seen, ~~He~~ communicates of His infinite goodness to the finite as much as it is able to receive.



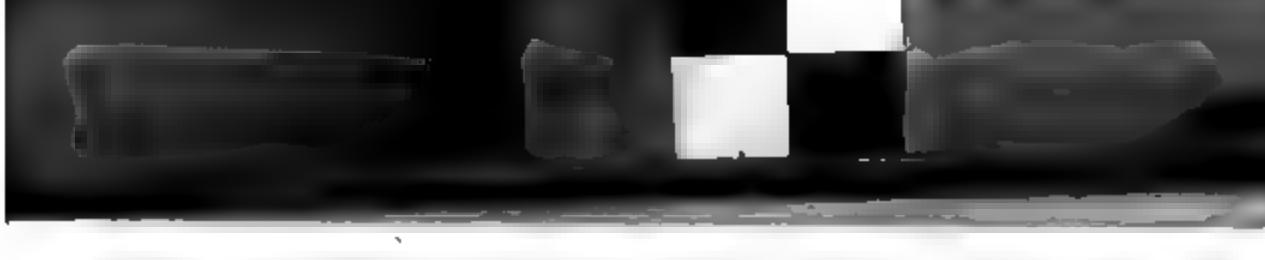
## LECTURE NINTH

### PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT (*Concluded*)

AT our last meeting we were engaged in the attempt to understand the general doctrine of Philo, especially as indicated in his *De Mundi Opificio*.<sup>1</sup> In that work Philo expresses his belief that the Pentateuch contains a complete and final revelation. This belief extends to the Septuagint, every word and even letter of which he regards as inspired. The modern distinction between scientific and religious truth he would have rejected as impious. For him the Mosaic writings contain a complete philosophy or theology, and this he regards as the main superiority of Moses over all other law-givers. This view he seeks to establish by the method of allegory, a method which was borrowed from Greek writers, and in Philo's time was generally accepted by Graeco-Jewish thinkers. By the use of this method Philo is enabled to find in scripture the philosophical doctrines which he has borrowed from his Greek teachers. The result is an extraordinary commingling of Greek and Jewish ideas.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the account of creation contained in Genesis is characterized in terms borrowed from the Platonic philosophy. The world is first produced in the Divine Mind, and is thus the archetype of the visible universe. Philo, while

## 218 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

holding fast by the Jewish conception of God as transcending all finite existence, unconsciously transforms it, under the influence of Greek ideas, into the very different conception of God as the Architect or Former of the world, not its Creator. Hence for him "matter" is uncreated and eternal. The "beauty" of the cosmos is not comprehensible by the ordinary mind, but it is visible at times to those who attain by philosophical contemplation to the state of "enthusiasm." Even they, however, never reach that fulness of divine illumination, and consequent infallibility of utterance, which was granted to the biblical writers, and above all to Moses; and hence every word of Moses has a deep spiritual meaning. While Philo admits the eternity of "matter," he rejects as impious the prevalent view of the Greek poets and philosophers, that the "world" is eternal. Such a doctrine denies the *creative activity* and the *providence* of God. In proof of the former he employs the argument from "design," which he extracts from scripture by his usual allegorical method; interpreting the statement that "the spirit of God moved upon the water" as meaning that "God acted upon unformed matter." This doctrine is already implied in the *Wisdom of Solomon*; and, as we may conclude, was an accepted belief in Philo's time. The eternity of the world, again, is subversive of the providence of God, because that which already exists apart from the creative energy of God, must be entirely independent of Him. Hence Philo here employs what Kant calls the "cosmological" argument: the finite and changing presupposes the infinite and unchanging. Philo, however, absolutely separates the energy of God from its manifestation in the world, and therefore he has to attempt to connect the one with the other by the interposition of sub-



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 219

ordinate "powers." In our time the "six days" of creation have been held by some to mean "six ages." Philo has a more trenchant method of reconciling his philosophical creed with the text of scripture. In his view God cannot be truly represented as acting in time, and therefore he holds that the "six days" of creation are meant to indicate the order of *superiority* in the visible universe, not the order of *time*. The "heavens" are said to have been created "first," because they are "the first," i.e. the "highest" of all created things. Further, there is a mystical significance in the "six"; for "six," as Philo learned from the Pythagoreans, is a "perfect" number, and, as at once male and female (odd and even), it is "productive" or "generative"; hence, it was intentionally chosen as the number expressive of the "perfect creation." This interpretation, as Philo argues, is confirmed by the use of the term "one day" (*ημέρα μία*); for this signifies the absolute "oneness" of the "intelligible" or "ideal" cosmos—the cosmos existing in the divine mind. Hence the beginning of Genesis (chap. i.) gives an account of the eternal creation of the *archetypal world*, not of the *visible universe*. If further proof were needed, does not Moses speak of the earth as "invisible and unformed" (*ἀόπατος καὶ ἀκατακείματος*)—showing that he was speaking of the "ideal" earth, the earth as it existed in the divine mind prior to the formation of the "visible" earth? Philo, therefore, proceeds to explain the creation of the world by an elaborate comparison of the Creator to a human architect. No doubt he warns us that the analogy is imperfect; but the reason he gives is that God, as separated from the world, is incomprehensible. This is the real explanation of his continual practice of falling back upon metaphors, which explain nothing. The divine

## 220 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

"powers," already mentioned, constitute the divine reason. The sensible world, however, as Philo now explains, does not bear the impress of the complete nature of God, but only of His "goodness." The same thought had already appeared in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. This is an instance in which Philo's Jewish belief overmastered his Greek training; for "the good" in Plato is another term for the perfection of God, not a special attribute. Philo's explanation of this limitation in the manifestation of God is that, while the divine love is infinite, the finite is unable to receive all that God is willing to bestow. That the world is an imperfect copy of the ideal world Philo finds to be the teaching of scripture, in which we read that man was "made after the image of God"; i.e. man is a "copy" of the "image of God,"—in other words, of the "ideal" man, as he exists in the divine mind. And as man is only a part of the visible universe, we must infer that the whole universe is a copy of the ideal universe; which, again, is the product of the divine "powers." Thus Philo seeks to preserve the absoluteness and inscrutability of the divine nature, while claiming that God is the ultimate Cause of all things. Convinced that the account in Genesis of the first day of creation must refer to the origin, not of the "sensible" but of the "ideal" world, Philo proceeds to show that from it we may gain some idea of the various parts of this ideal world in the order of their rank. The creation of the "ideal" world is not in time; for time, as the succession of states exhibited by the heavens in its revolution, could not exist prior to the creation of the visible heavens. The heavens are first in rank or ideal beauty, and this is what is meant by "in the beginning God made the heavens." From this analysis of the opening of Philo's treatise we

## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 221

see that his ideas revolve around certain central points, —(1) the absoluteness of God, (2) the divine *λόγος*, (3) the visible creation, including man.

Philo affirms, in the most unqualified way, that it is impossible for man to comprehend the nature of God. As incomprehensible, God is inexpressible, and therefore is said to be without qualities. Philo, however, does not mean that God is purely abstract, but only that all the predicates by which created things are characterized are inadequate to express the Infinite. Thus his doctrine alternates, like the Substance of Spinoza, between the absolutely indeterminate and the infinitely determinate. He is really committed, by the logic of his system, to the former, but he *means* to assert the latter. God is absolutely one and indivisible; but, though He exists beyond creation, He has filled the world with Himself.

In resuming our study of Philo and attempting to estimate his possible influence on the New Testament, it is especially necessary to have a clear conception of his doctrine of the *Logos*, because here, if anywhere, we may expect to find the main point of contact between his philosophy and the formulation of Christian ideas.

The term *λόγος*, in its ordinary use, means either *thought* or *speech*. This double meaning is made use of by Philo to explain the relation subsisting between the intelligible or ideal world, which exists only in the divine mind, and the sensible universe which is its visible embodiment and image. "The *λόγος*," says Philo, "is two-fold in the universe and in the nature of man. In the universe there is, on the one hand, the *λόγος* which has to do with the incorporeal and archetypal ideas constituting the intelligible cosmos, and, on the other hand, the *λόγος* which is concerned with

## 222 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

visible things, these being copies and imitations of the ideas from which this sensible cosmos has been fashioned. In man, again, there is, on the one hand, the *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος* (inner reason), and, on the other hand, the *λόγος προφορικός* (outer reason). The former is like a fountain, the latter—the expressed *λόγος*—like the stream which flows forth from it; the seat of the one is in the ruling part (*τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*), the seat of the other—that which is expressed—is in the tongue and mouth and all the other organs of speech. . . . Two virtues have been assigned to it, expression (*δήλωσις*) and truth (*ἀληθεία*); for the *λόγος* of nature is true and expressive of all things, and the *λόγος* of the wise man, imitating the *λόγος* of nature, ought therefore to be absolutely incapable of falsehood; it ought to honour truth, and obscure nothing from envy, the knowledge of which can benefit those who have been instructed by it. Not but what there have been assigned to the two forms of the *λόγος* in us two appropriate virtues—to the *λόγος προφορικός* the virtue of expression (*δήλωσις*), and to the *λόγος* in the mind the virtue of truth (*ἀληθεία*); for it is not fitting that the mind should accept anything false, or that declaration (*έρμηνεία*) should be a hindrance to the most precise expression of truth."

In this passage Philo draws a parallel between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Thought and speech in man are related to each other, as the intelligible cosmos is related to the sensible cosmos. As in man the inner source is the intelligence, which is revealed outwardly in speech; so the archetypal ideas, which exist only in the divine intelligence, are expressed in the sensible cosmos, an imitation or copy of these ideas. The *λόγος* of the intelligible world constitutes its order and harmony, and from this same *λόγος*

## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 223

proceeds the order and harmony which is found in the visible universe in an outward form. Thus the intelligible and the sensible universe correspond as perfectly as truth and its outward expression in language. Hence man in grasping by his intelligence the order and harmony of the visible universe will attain to truth, and this truth he will adequately express when his language is the precise and accurate utterance of his thought.

In this instructive passage we see how Philo sought to preserve the absolute inscrutability of God, and yet to explain how it is possible for man to have in a certain sense a knowledge of God. Though in His inner essence incomprehensible by any but Himself, God has created the intelligible cosmos by His self-activity. From this intelligible cosmos, which constitutes the divine *λόγος*, is to be distinguished the visible cosmos, which is its outward expression.<sup>1</sup> Thus the *λόγος* is, on its inner side, the *Thought* of God, and on its outer side the *Word* of God. The *Word* is therefore in Philo the rational order manifested in the visible cosmos; in modern language it is the system of laws constituting the permanent and abiding element in all the changes of phenomena. To comprehend this system is therefore to grasp the outward expression of the divine intelligence.

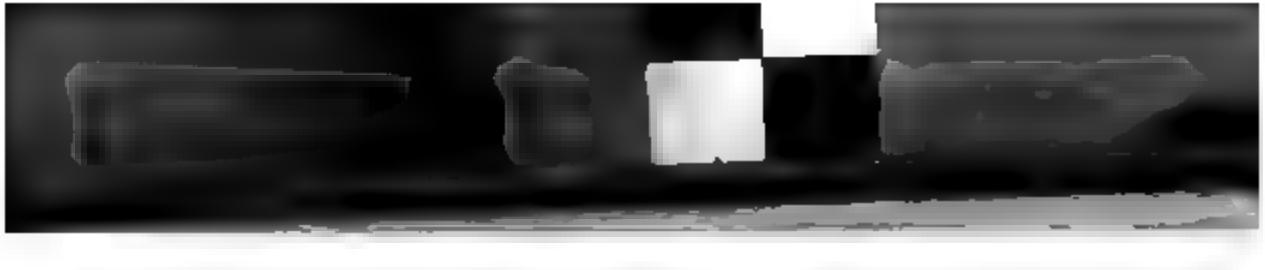
Since he holds that God always remains in absolute unity with Himself, Philo naturally represents the *λόγος* as the instrument of creation, while God is the ultimate cause. "God is the cause," he says, "not instrument. Whatever comes into being is produced by means of an instrument, but by the cause of all things. In the production of anything there must co-operate (1) that by which it is made; (2) that from which it is made; (3) that through which it is made;

## 224 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

(4) that on *account of which* it is made; in other words, (1) the cause, (2) the matter, (3) the instrument, (4) the reason or purpose (*aἰτία*). Thus, in the production of a house or a whole city there must co-operate, (1) the architect, (2) the stones and timber, (3) the instruments. Now, the architect is the cause *by which* the house is made, the stones and timber are the 'matter' *from which* the building is made, the instruments are the things *through which* it is made, and (4) the *reason* of its being made is to afford shelter and protection. Passing from particular things, look at the production of that greatest of all buildings or cities, the world, and you will find that God is the cause *by whom* it has been produced, that the matter is the four elements from which it is put together, and the instrument is the *λόγος* of God through which it has been formed, and the reason of its existence is the goodness of the Creator" (I. 161, § 35).

The *λόγος* is here distinguished from God, as the *instrument* from the *cause*. Following the analogy of a human architect, and adopting the Aristotelian distinction of the efficient cause, the matter, the instrument and the end, Philo represents the visible universe as a vast temple or city, the orderly arrangement of which is due to the *λόγος*, i.e. the outer expression of the divine word. The *λόγος* or *Word* is therefore the instrument employed by God in the creation of the world. The *Word* is not the cause of the world—the primal energy from which it has proceeded—but the means by which the world has received its order and system.

As the *λόγος* is the instrument by means of which God made the world, it is in its nature intermediate between God and man. It is therefore "neither unbegotten as God, nor begotten as man" (I. 502), but



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 225

is eternally begotten; in other words, the *λόγος* has not come into being in time, but is eternal; while, on the other hand, it is not self-creative, but is dependent upon the original creative energy of God. Philo's view may therefore be summed up in the phrase: the *λόγος* is eternally begotten, not made.

Again, when the *λόγος* is viewed as the expressed thought or *Word*, and therefore as the rational principle of the visible cosmos, it is called the "eldest" or "first-born Son" of God (*πρεσβύτατος υἱός—πρωτόγονος υἱός*, I. 414, 308). Hence we find Philo saying that "the eldest *λόγος* of the self-existent Being puts on the cosmos as a garment, for it arrays itself in earth and water and air and fire and their products, as the individual soul is clothed with the body, and the mind of the wise man with the virtues." "The *λόγος* of the self-existent Being," he adds, "is the bond (*δεσμός*) of all things, which holds together and closely unites all the parts, preventing them from being loosened and separated" (I. 592). By the "first-born Son of God," we are therefore to understand that ideal bond or law which determines the order and harmony of the visible universe. Philo, however, conceives of the Word not merely as the law of nature, but as the law which determines the course of human life, and especially the destiny of states and nations. "Once Greece flourished," he says, "but the Macedonians deprived it of its bloom. Then Macedonia had its period of power, but it was gradually dismembered, and finally its authority entirely perished. Prior to the Macedonians the Persians were prosperous, but in a single day their vast and mighty kingdom was overthrown. And now the Parthians are more powerful than the Persians, who but the other day were their masters. Egypt once had a long and glorious career, but like a cloud its great dominion has

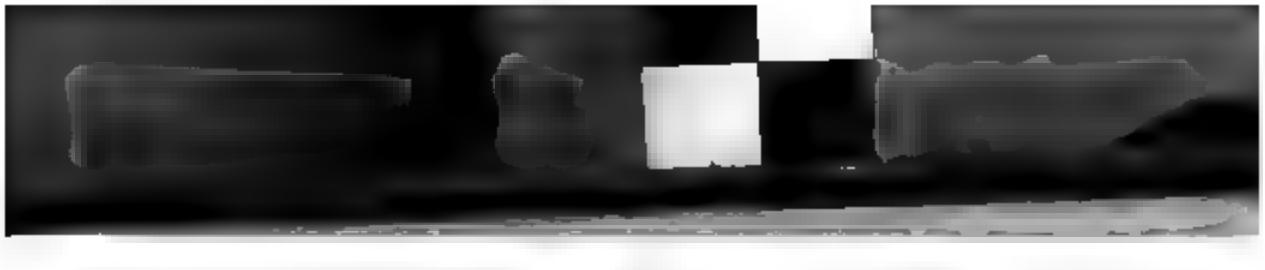
## 226 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

passed away. Where are the Ethiopians, where are Carthage and Libya? Where are the kings of the Pontus? What has befallen Europe and Asia, and, in a word, the whole habitable world? Is it not tossed up and down and agitated like a ship at sea—at one time sailing under prosperous winds and again struggling with contrary gales? For the divine *λόγος*, which most men call fortune (*τύχη*), moves in a circle. Ever flowing on, it acts upon cities and nations, assigning the possessions of one to another, exchanging the possessions of each by periods, but ever making for the conversion of the whole habitable world into one city, with that highest form of polity, democracy" (I. 298).

The *λόγος* is also called "the man of God." As such it is called the "father" of all noble men, "a father not mortal, but immortal"; and as the "heavenly man" (*οὐρανίος ἄνθρωπος*) it is opposed to Adam, the "earthly man" (*γῆινος ἄνθρωπος*).

The *λόγος* is also called the "second God." "Why does Moses say," he asks, "that God 'made man in the image of God,' as if he were speaking of another God, and not of Himself? This mode of expression is beautifully and wisely chosen. For no mortal could be made in the image of the most high God, the Father of the universe, but only in the image of the second God (*δεύτερος θεός*), who is the *λόγος* of the other. For it was fitting that the rational (*λογικός*) impression on the soul of man should be engraved by the divine *λόγος*, since the God prior to the *λόγος* is higher than every rational nature, and it was not lawful for any created being to be made like Him who is above reason."

Philo's whole system of thought compels him to interpose the *λόγος* between the incomprehensible and self-contained God and man, and hence man as



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 227

a rational being is the image of the *λόγος*, which is itself an image of God. It was therefore natural for Philo to represent the *λόγος* as the mediator between God and man. "The Father," he says, "the creator of the universe, has given to the *λόγος* the privilege of standing as the mediator between the Creator and that which He has made. And this same *λόγος* is an intercessor (*ἰκέτης*) to the immortal God in behalf of the afflicted race of mankind." As the eternal Word of God, the *λόγος* maintains the universe in perpetuity, and secures the permanence and order of human society. As an "intercessor," the *λόγος* is naturally called the "high priest."

So far the *λόγος* has been characterized as (1) the Word, (2) the instrument of creation, (3) eternally begotten, (4) the eldest or first-born Son of God, (5) the "man of God," (6) the "heavenly man," (7) the "second God," (8) the Mediator, (9) the Intercessor, (10) the High Priest. All these ways of characterizing the *λόγος* find their parallel in the New Testament. To them we may add (11) the Logos as the manna, the bread that came down from heaven, (12) the living stream, (13) the sword that turned every way, or the "cutter" (*τομεύς*)—conceived as at once the divider of the genus into its species and of the sacrifice into its parts, (14) the cloud at the Red Sea, that divided the Egyptians and Israelites, (15) the rock in the wilderness; all of which appear in another way in the New Testament.

It may be asked whether Philo conceived the *λόγος* as a *person*. That he *personifies* it is implied in his calling it the Son of God, the man of God, the heavenly man, the second God, the Mediator, the High Priest; but it is one thing to represent the *λόγος* under these figures, and another to maintain

## 228 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

that it is a person. The answer seems to be that the Logos is never conceived by Philo as a distinct person, but always as the Thought of God, constituting the divine Mind, which is expressed in the rational order of the visible universe. It is true that Philo finds in the angelic or divine appearances mentioned in scripture a reference to the *λόγος*, but he invariably explains these as allegorical modes of expressing the nature of the divine reason. We must, however, admit, I think, that Philo also accepted these divine appearances as actual embodiments of the *λόγος*, as when he speaks of it as the guide to the Patriarchs, the angel who appeared to Hagar, the avenging angel who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the God who appeared to Jacob, the divine form who changed the name of Jacob to Israel, the angel of the Lord in the burning bush, the angel who appeared to Balaam, the guide of the Israelites in the wilderness. If it seems strange that Philo should accept the accounts of these divine appearances literally, while yet he found in them a mystical signification, we must remember that his whole mode of thought is an illogical combination of traditional Judaism with Greek conceptions. It is no more surprising that Philo should have accepted with implicit faith the Jewish belief in angels and divine appearances, while holding a philosophical theory inconsistent with that belief, than that he should have held tenaciously by the Jewish ritual, while yet he found in every feature of it an allegory of the divine nature in its relation to man.

Besides the parallels with the New Testament already mentioned, there are one or two very striking resemblances in his treatment of the kindred notion of the law. "In Gen. xxvi. 5 we are told that 'Abraham kept all the law of God.' Now, the Law

## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 229

(νόμος) is nothing but the divine Word (λόγος), which commands what ought to be done, and forbids what ought not to be done, as scripture bears witness when it is said, 'he received the Law (νόμος) from His words' (ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων: Deut. xxxiii. 4). If then the Word (λόγος) of God is the Law (νόμος) of God, and the righteous man keeps the Law, he also entirely keeps the Word; so that, as scripture says, the actions of the wise man are the words of God" (I. 456).

We have in this passage a curious interblending of the traditional faith in the Torah, which is characteristic of the Palestinian Schools, and the Greek conception of law as the order and harmony of the universe. The Law is the Word of God, because it is directly inspired by God, but it is also the Word, because it is an expression of the rational system which is embodied in the visible cosmos. Thus the Law as contained in the Mosaic writings is the word of God, containing the commands and prohibitions binding upon men, but these commands and prohibitions are an expression of the Word as the law of things, and more particularly of the moral law.

In this way the Mosaic law, the Stoical law of nature, and the Aristotelian conception of reason are brought into a sort of harmony.

Closely connected with this identification of the Word and the Law, is Philo's doctrine that in obedience to the Law is freedom, while subjection to passion is slavery. "Men who are under the dominion of anger or desire or any other passion, or of intentional wickedness, are complete slaves, while those who love the Law are free. For the Law is unerring, right reason (ὁ ὁρθὸς λόγος): it is not made by this or that man; it is no transitory law of mortals, written

## 230 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

on parchments, or engraved on columns, the lifeless on the lifeless, but an eternal law stamped by the immortal nature on the immortal mind" (II. 452). We can hardly fail to see here the beginning of that wide conception of law, which is found in the Pauline epistles: a law written on the "fleshy tables of the heart," such as those had who, "not having the law, were a law unto themselves." Thus Philo, while holding by the letter of the Mosaic law, is under the domination of a higher conception of law, as having its seat in the conscience of the spiritual man.

But perhaps the most striking parallel to St. Paul is found in the conception of the *λόγος* as the condition of moral guilt, reminding us of St. Paul's saying, "the law entered in that sin might abound." Hence the *λόγος* is called the *ἔλεγχος*, the convincer of guilt. "The *ἔλεγχος*, which dwells in and is inseparable from each soul, refusing to accept what is wrong, always preserves its nature as a hater of evil and lover of virtue, being itself at once accuser and judge" (II. 195). Here the conception of the Mosaic law has fallen into the background, and the reason or conscience is the convincer of sin, just because man contains within himself, or is conscious of, the divine *λόγος*.

Philo holds that the soul existed prior to its union with the body and will survive the decay of the latter. "Every man in his reason is connected with the divine *λόγος*, being an ectype (*ἐκμαγεῖον*) or fragment (*ἀπόσπασμα*) or spark (*ἀπαύγασμα*) of that blessed nature, while in the structure of his body he is connected with the rest of the world" (I. 35). Hence the wise man—Abraham, Jacob, Moses—confesses that while on earth he is a stranger in the Egypt of sense.

## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 231

This conception of the soul as a stranger dwelling in an alien world naturally leads to the idea that the body is in some sense the source of evil. "A thousand things escape from and elude the human mind, because it is entangled in so great a crowd of impressions, which seduce and deceive it by false opinions. Thus the soul may be said to be buried in a mortal body, which may be called its tomb" (II. 367). "It is possible for the divine spirit to dwell in the soul, but not to take up its permanent abode there. And why should we wonder at this? For there is nothing in this world the possession of which is stable and lasting, but mortal affairs are continually wavering in the balance, now inclining to one side and then to the other, and liable to continual alternations. And the greatest cause of our ignorance is the flesh (*σάρξ*) and our connection with the flesh. With this agrees the saying of Moses: Because 'they are flesh, the divine spirit' is not able to abide in them. And indeed marriage and the rearing of children, provision for the necessary wants, and meanness, and avarice, and occupation are apt to wither wisdom, ere it come into bloom. Nor does anything so impede the growth of the soul as the fleshly nature (*σαρκῶν φύσις*). This is the first and main foundation of ignorance and want of understanding, and upon it each of the things spoken of is built" (I. 266). Hence Philo speaks of the life of the wicked as "working and pursuing what is dear to the flesh" (*τὰ φίλα τῷ σαρκὶ ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ μεθοδεύειν*).<sup>1</sup> "There is an original sin in the flesh, and in man as a created being, against which the divine spirit is ever striving. There is a strife in the camp, says Moses; that is, the spirit within us cries out. Not that the bodily substance of the flesh is to be regarded as the source of evil, but the flesh

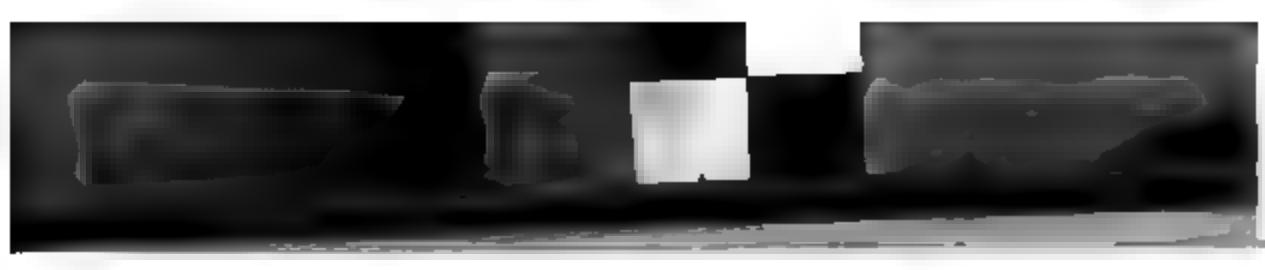
## 232 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

comprehends in itself the ideal evil will, ever seeking to satisfy the lusts of the flesh."

" Hence Philo is led to make a new division of the soul into two parts: the one in alliance with the flesh, the other separate from it. There are two kinds of men, he says—those who live in the flesh, and those who live in the Spirit. And there is an outer soul, *ψυχὴ σαρκική*, the essence of which is blood, corresponding to the first of these two classes; and an inner soul, *ψυχὴ λογική*, which answers to the latter, into which God puts his Spirit. That is the true soul; the soul of souls, as it were—the apple of the eye (II. 241, 356). In like manner he seems disposed to confine immortality to the souls of the good."<sup>1</sup>

The end of human life is to become like God, and virtue is the means to this end. Man is by nature corrupt, and therefore lies under the condemnation of God; but God gives men grace by which they are enabled to serve Him, and without this grace even virtue is of no avail. By the power of the *λόγος* God will raise the just man, and bring him near to Himself in heaven. There are three ways to the higher life—*ἀσκησις*, *διδαχὴ* and *φύσις*. Those who follow the first way are engaged in a perpetual strife and struggle; the second is that of instruction, which Philo finds in the ordinary elements of Greek education—grammar, music, geometry, rhetoric and dialectic. These two ways are described, in terms suggestive of St. Paul, as respectively "milk for babes" and "strong meat." He who follows the highest way—that of "nature" (*φύσις*)—experiences peace and the joy of resignation, and being pure in heart he enjoys the beatific vision of God, though he sees Him only as through a glass (*ὡσπερ διὰ κατόπτρου*). Philo also uses such terms

<sup>1</sup> Jowett's *Epistles of St. Paul*, 3rd ed., i. 413.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 233

as "hungering and thirsting after the good and noble," "hungering after the noble life," "being a slave of God." He also speaks of the "true riches" ( $\alpha\lambdaηθιω\delta\pi\lambdaούτο\delta$ ) ; and says that there be "few who find" the true way of life (I. 488, 165; II. 198, 425).

✓ Besides the four virtues of Plato and the Stoics, Philo mentions the three graces of hope, repentance and righteousness ; and he has also a second triad of faith, hope and love, which are the fairest graces of the pious soul, the greatest being love. But though Philo warns his readers against lip-service and superstition, calling faith "the most beautiful and blameless sacrifice," he never surrenders his belief in the perpetual obligation of the Jewish ceremonial law, and he accepts the popular belief in ransom and sacrifice.

The parallels between Philo and the New Testament which have just been cited are too striking to be accidental. Similar parallels could easily be multiplied. As Siegfried has shown in his *Philo von Alexandria*, there are striking resemblances between Philo and many of the New Testament writers, both in method and in matter. Time forbids us to follow these out in detail, but a summary of the results of such a comparison may be given.

In his epistles St. Paul employs some of the canons of interpretation accepted by Philo. One of these canons was, that scripture is not to be taken in a literal sense, when it expresses something that is unworthy of the perfection of God's nature. Applying this principle to Exod. xxii. 26-27,<sup>1</sup> Philo says that by the "raiment" there referred to is to be understood the

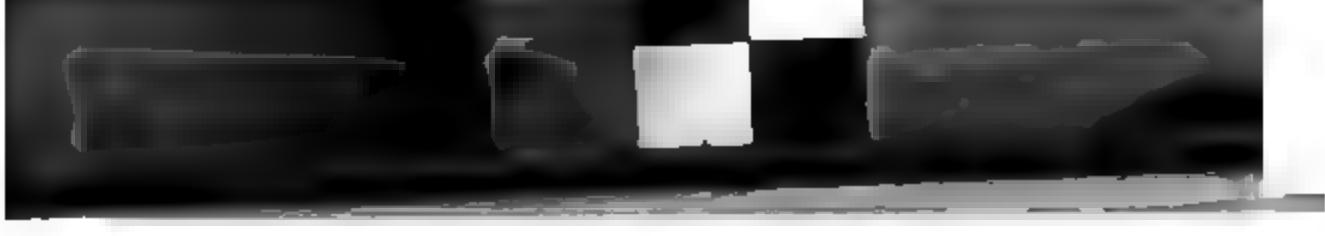
<sup>1</sup> "If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it to him by that the sun goeth down : For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin : wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will bear ; for I am gracious."

## 234 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

*λόγος* as the protector and guardian of man. Unless we so interpret the command, he argues, we suppose Moses to be laying down a law about a very trivial matter. Does the Creator and ruler of the universe concern himself about such trifles? The same sort of objection and the same kind of interpretation is applied by St. Paul in explanation of Deut. xxv. 4 : "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." This cannot mean, argues the Apostle, that God is careful of the ox, and hence we must understand it as a command to the Christian churches to support their teachers.

Again, in the allegorical method special significance was attached to the use of the *singular* number. In Gen. xvii. 16, a promise is made to Abraham that he should have a son by Sarah. Why is only *one* child promised? To indicate the truth, answers Philo, that "the good" is not in number, but in power. St. Paul employs similar reasoning in Gal. iii. 16. In Gen. xxii. 18, Abraham is told : "In thy seed (*σπέρμα*) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The Apostle's comment is : "He saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many ; but as of *one*, And to thy *seed*, which is Christ."

So, speaking of the "rock" that followed the Israelites in the wilderness, Philo says : "That 'rock,' employing elsewhere a name signifying the same thing, he calls 'manna,' the eldest *λόγος* of all things." Similarly, St. Paul in I Cor. x. 4 : "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them ; and that Rock was Christ." As Philo interprets the "raiment," the "rock" and the "manna" as metaphors for the *λόγος*, so St. Paul explains the "seed" and the "rock" to be Christ. There is therefore no doubt that the Apostle employs the same method as Philo.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 235

It is generally admitted that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has come under the influence of Alexandrian culture, and therefore, as we should expect, he freely employs the allegorical method. Thus, he sets aside the literal meaning when it contains something contradictory ; like Philo he draws an inference from the silence of scripture ; and he bases conclusions upon the meaning of a word, or upon its etymological signification.

Besides this agreement in method, there are many similarities between Philo and New Testament writers in metaphors, general modes of expression and ideas. Are we, then, to conclude that the New Testament writers have borrowed from Philo ? That would be a very rash inference. The truth rather is, that both were under the influence of widely diffused modes of thought and expression. As to the exegetical canons common to both, we have to remember that these were not peculiar to Alexandrian writers. Orthodox Jewish writers to a certain extent practised the same method of interpretation, and, in the case of St. Paul, this is sufficient to explain his use of that method. We have further to remember that "in the Pharisaic theology there are already Hellenic elements. Orthodox Judaism could not escape from the influences which arose from the victory of the Greeks over the East. The peoples who inhabited the eastern shores of the Mediterranean had a common history from the fourth century B.C., and acquired similar convictions."<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, Judaism and Hellenism are contrasted, we have to remember that Judaism already to a certain extent lives in the atmosphere of Greek modes of thought and expression. "There is not," as Harnack says, "a single New Testament writing, which does not

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, i. 55, n.

## 236 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

betray the influence of the mode of thought and general culture which resulted from the Hellenizing of the East. Indeed, this is shown by the use of the Greek translation of the Old Testament. We may even say, that the Gospel itself is historically unintelligible, so long as we regard it as an exclusive product of Judaism which is in no way affected by any foreign influence. But, on the other hand, it is just as evident, that *specific* Greek ideas neither form the presupposition of the Gospel nor of the principal New Testament writings. The writers of the New Testament breathe the spiritual atmosphere created by Greek culture, . . . but the religious ideas in which they live and move come to them from the Old Testament, and especially from the Psalms and the Prophets.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, as we have seen, the main ideas of Philo, and his whole mode of thought, are determined by Greek philosophy. We may therefore be certain that, whatever superficial resemblances there are between him and the New Testament writers—and these are neither few nor indefinite—the whole spirit and view of life is fundamentally different. The distinction is not due merely to the acceptance by the Christian writers of Jesus as the Messiah, but it extends to the whole of the conceptions which made Christianity a new power in the world. There is only one New Testament writer who was certainly acquainted with the writings of Philo, or at least with the main ideas which those writings express—the writer of the Fourth Gospel ; and in him the antagonism is more fundamental than in any other writer. Whether the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John, or by a disciple of his—and modern criticism has shown that there is no conclusive evidence against the authorship—it is certain that

<sup>1</sup> Harnack’s *Dogmengeschichte*, i. 47, n.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 237

it was a conscious rejection of the Philonic conception of the *λόγος*. But, in other writings, as e.g. the epistles of St. Paul and St. James and the epistle to the Hebrews, the antagonism is none the less marked because it is less conscious. The really important result of a comparison of Philo and the New Testament is, therefore, that it enables us to see more clearly the unique character of Christianity, and to separate from it the accidents of its expression, whether these were due to modes of thought predominantly Jewish or predominantly Greek. The spirit of Christianity is certainly not dependent upon the earthen vessel in which it was contained. On the other hand, it would be a grave mistake to assume that we can remove from Christianity all the elements which may be called theological, and narrow it down to simple faith in the Lord Jesus. Simple faith in the Lord Jesus is no doubt all that is essential to individual salvation ; but it is not all that is essential to the regeneration of the world. The teaching of our Lord contained implicitly a complete system of theology ; and when St. Paul and the New Testament writers sought to set forth this system explicitly, they were only seeking to supply a fundamental need of the human spirit. The question rather is, whether the first form in which the system of ideas which the Master expressed in all their freshness and living force was not unduly narrowed by the want of categories adequate to express it. There is, indeed, no *opposition* between the New Testament writers and the Master, but there is undoubtedly a difference in the mode of statement ; and it is a very narrow and indefensible view which would insist that we are bound by the form of the disciples and may neglect the larger truth of the Master. Let us, then, begin by a comparison of St. Paul and Philo.

## 238 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

"The centre of all St. Paul's life and thought," as Harnack says, "was his absolute faith that Christ had revealed himself to him, that the Gospel was the revelation of the crucified and risen Christ, and that God had called him to proclaim this Gospel to the world. Those three ideas were in the consciousness of the Apostle absolutely inseparable from one another. If Christ had not revealed himself to him, there was no foundation for his faith ; if the Gospel was not the revelation of the crucified and risen Christ, there was no new revelation ; and if he had not himself become the medium of this new revelation he had no call to proclaim the Gospel to others. In this new consciousness consisted his conversion, and his whole life was determined by it. In this faith he was conscious of having undergone a complete revolution in his whole being. His attitude towards others was therefore completely changed. He was no longer a Jew, but a 'new man in Christ Jesus,' and therefore all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, were related to one another and to God in an identical way. That being so, his mission was to lead the Jew beyond the limits of Judaism, and to bring the Gentile to a consciousness of his true relation to God and his fellow-men. The crucified and risen Christ was not only the central principle of his theology, but the ruling principle in his life and thought. The Christ was not the man, Jesus of Nazareth, who had been exalted by God to a position beyond that of ordinary humanity, but the mighty personal spiritual being, who had humiliated Himself for a time, and had destroyed the world of the Law, of sin and of death, and who as spirit worked in the souls of believers. Hence for him theology was the doctrine of the liberating power of the spirit of Christ, operative in all the concrete relations of human life and of human need. The Christ



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 239

who has overcome the law, sin and death, *lives* as spirit and through His spirit in believers, who therefore do not know Him according to the flesh. He is a creative power of life for those who from faith in His saving death on the cross allow Him to work in their souls, *i.e.* to be justified. Life in the spirit, which is the result of union with Christ, will at last reveal itself also in the body, not in the flesh. Looking back at the past, St. Paul regarded theology as the doctrine of the abolition of the Law. He therefore views the old in the light of the Gospel, maintaining that it has been done away by Christ. Hence the proofs from scripture are merely introduced in support of his inner convictions. These revolve around the idea, that the true meaning of the Law, of sin and of death is only revealed in their abolition. By the Law the Law is destroyed, in sinful flesh sin is overcome, through death death is conquered.

"The historical view of St. Paul is set forth in the relation of Christ to Adam and Abraham, and to the Law of Moses; it looks forward to the time, when God shall be all in all, after Christ has 'put all things under his feet'; and to a time when the prophecies given to the Jewish people shall be fulfilled in the salvation of all Israel. The doctrine of Christ in St. Paul starts from the confession of the primitive church, that Christ as a heavenly being and as Lord of the living and the dead is with the Father. His theology does not rest upon the historical Christ, but upon the pre-existent Christ, the 'man from heaven,' who in self-denying love made Himself flesh, in order to destroy the power of nature and death; but he refers to the works and the life of the historical Christ as the pattern for all men of life in the spirit.

"In controverting Christian opponents, who sought to

## 240 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

combine the gospel of the crucified Christ with the belief in 'righteousness by works,' St. Paul makes use of arguments and even of ideas borrowed from the Pharisaic theology; and he employs the exegetical method practised by Pharisaic theologians, as well as by Alexandrian writers. But the dialectic in regard to the law, circumcision and sacrifice does not form the central source of his inspiration, but is merely the outer body of his doctrine. St. Paul is the highest product of the Jewish spirit as transformed by the creative power of the spirit of Christ. Pharisaism had fulfilled its mission in producing a man of this type, and was henceforth dead. In a measure St. Paul shares the Hellenic spirit, but this spirit he imbibed, not from the direct influence of Hellenic writers, but from his Pharisaic training. In his mission to the Gentiles he had the advantage of an intimate acquaintance with the Greek translation of the Old Testament, considerable skill in handling the Greek tongue, and an insight into the spiritual life of the Greeks. His great power, however, lay in his gospel of the *spiritual* Christ. This gospel he could express in modes of thought comprehensible by the Greek mind. In his Apologetics he even turns to his purposes the philosophical doctrines of the Greeks, though it cannot be shown that he had a direct acquaintance with Greek literature and philosophy. Thus he prepares the way for the diffusion of the Gospel in the Greek and Roman world. But this in no way affects his central doctrine of *salvation*, which was neither Jewish nor Gentile, but universal."<sup>1</sup>

Now, when we consider that the centre of all St. Paul's ideas is faith in the crucified and risen Christ, we see at once that his whole conception of life differs from that of Philo. Both, indeed, speak of the

<sup>1</sup> Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, i. 89-91.



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 241

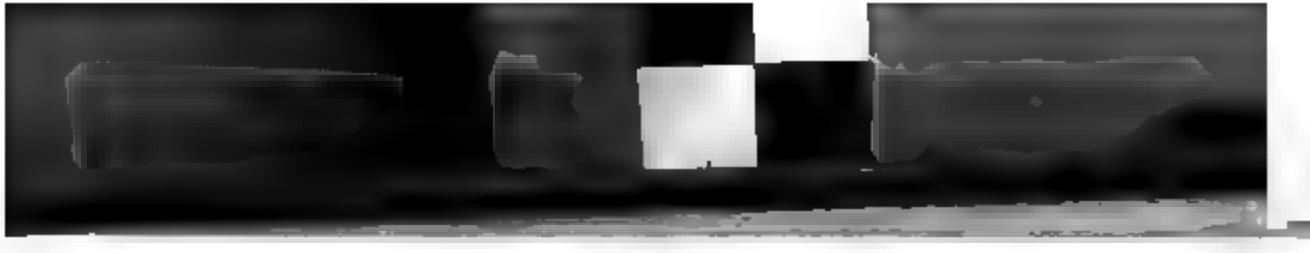
"heavenly man," but their point of view is diametrically opposite. The "heavenly man" of Philo is not a person, but an abstract archetype: it is the divine pattern in the divine mind after which individual men are formed. But this archetype could never possibly be realised in any individual man. St. Paul, on the other hand, finds in the crucified and risen Christ, the manifestation of the Son of God. Whereas Philo's "Son of God" is merely the divine mind in operation, St. Paul finds in Christ the true Son of God, who humbled himself by appearing in the flesh, and who thereby revealed the innermost nature of God. Whereas in Philo God remains in His own nature absolutely inscrutable, St. Paul sees in the crucified and risen Christ the manifestation of the infinite love of God. This is no mere superficial distinction: it is the fundamental note of Christianity, which distinguishes it from all other religions. And as St. Paul's conception of the Son of God differs *toto coelo* from Philo's, so his conception of salvation is fundamentally different. The salvation of man for Philo was conceived to lie in the illumination of the mind by a philosophical conception of God, and obedience to the law of reason. Thus, it was the narrow way open only to the cultured few. St. Paul's way of salvation was open to all. No distinction of Jew or Gentile, cultured or uncultured, free man or slave, could separate a man from union with God through the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in him. Philo no doubt liberated himself from the prepossession that only the Jew was capable of salvation, but he only got rid of this national limit to fall into the Greek idea of a limit in human nature arising from an intellectual defect. And further, while Philo conceives of all men as capable of goodness, he also regards the Law of Moses as binding upon

## 242 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

all men. Thus he is limited in two ways : on the one hand, the man of culture alone is capable of salvation, and, on the other hand, the Jewish ceremonial law is not temporary, but eternal. St. Paul, on the other hand, bases his doctrine upon a faith of which all men are capable, and sweeps away the whole ceremonial law, which he regards as merely temporary. The universalism of Philo was no true universalism ; that of Paul was based upon the fundamental sinfulness of all men, and the possibility of salvation through faith in the love of God. \ We can thus understand how Philo's doctrine had no influence beyond the schools, while Christianity turned the world upside down. The more we reflect upon the doctrine of Philo, the more clearly we see that it was impotent to regenerate the race. And even as an abstract creed, it was merely a combination of discrepant ideas. There is, in his theory, no real manifestation of God. The inscrutable Being, who cannot be in any way defined, is little better than the deification of Nothing. His *λόγος*, viewed on its higher side, is but the hypostatizing of abstract ideas ; and, on its lower side, it does not take us beyond the idea of an abstract law which operates beyond, but not in, the spirit of man. Thus, from either point of view, it has no more potency than an abstract law of nature. St. Paul, on the other hand, has grasped the principle of the self-manifestation of God, and the possibility of the regenerated man living in the Spirit of the Son of God. Thus, in his doctrine, we are dealing with the actual manifestation of God, and with the living principle operative in the souls of men.

When we compare Philo with the writer of the Fourth Gospel we find the same superficial resemblance, and the same fundamental opposition.

(1) We have seen how Philo affirms the absolute



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 243

incomprehensibility of God. "Though God is by nature visible, no man has seen Him." This language naturally suggests the similar statement in the Fourth Gospel (i. 18), "No man hath seen God at any time." By the false method of assuming that similarity of statement is a proof of borrowing, it may be argued that St. John was indebted to Philo for his conception of the invisibility of God. Now, not to mention that Philo's conception of the incomprehensibility and invisibility of God had taken a firm hold both of Palestinian and Alexandrian writers before Philo, it is easy to see that, in words which are almost identical, the two writers are expressing a totally different idea. In the passage where Philo speaks of the invisibility of God, he goes on to say that "the cause lies in the weakness of the creature," i.e. in the "imbecility of the human intellect," to use the phraseology of Sir William Hamilton. It is thus a limit in the human intelligence which, in Philo's view, prevents us from comprehending the nature of God; and he adds that "we must become God—which is impossible—before we can comprehend God." But no such doctrine is suggested by the Gospel writer. After saying that "no man hath seen God at any time," he adds: "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." What the writer has in his mind is that, prior to the revelation of God by Jesus Christ, the Father was in His full nature unknown to man, but is now revealed as He truly is. That this is his meaning is evident from the words immediately preceding: "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The contrast is therefore between the Law and the Gospel; and the fundamental thought is, that God, whose true nature had been hidden, is

## **244 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

now revealed as a God of love. No doubt the Gospel writer holds by the thought of the spirituality of God, but in his view God is not hidden but revealed. There is, in truth, nothing in the New Testament to countenance the doctrine of the absolute incomprehensibility of God, and theologians who interpret such passages in an agnostic sense do violence to its whole spirit. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is the utterance of the living Christian consciousness, not a dogmatic proposition; but it is incompatible with any theology which sets up an impassable barrier between God and man. If theology is to remain Christian, it must discard this fiction of an absolutely incomprehensible God by providing a completely reasoned basis for the Christian consciousness of a self-manifesting God.

Philo then, as we see, so far from anticipating the Christian idea of God, merely expresses the conception current in his day among his countrymen. And it is significant that, in defending his preconception of the inscrutability of God, he employs the dualistic modes of thought which he had learned from his Greek teachers. The false abstraction of an incomprehensible God on the one side, has as its complement the equally false abstraction of formless matter on the other side; so that God is not the creative source of all things, but merely the Architect who fashions the world. Thus the very writer who imagines that he exalts God by declaring Him to be incomprehensible, falls back upon the analogy of a human artist when he attempts to explain the creation of the world. This defect still permeates much of our current speculation. It is still supposed that God in respect of His relation to the world may be conceived as a kind of external artificer; a view which rests upon the blasphemous



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 245

notion of the independent existence of the material world.

(2) The *λόγος* is conceived by Philo as, on the one hand, the Thought of God, and, on the other, the expression of this Thought in the visible universe ; and this Word is represented as the "instrument" by which the cosmos is formed. When we turn to the Fourth Gospel we read : " In the beginning was the *λόγος*, and the *λόγος* was with God, and the *λόγος* was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were by Him (*δι' αὐτοῦ*), and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." The two modes of statement have undoubtedly the strongest resemblance. But there are fundamental differences. According to Philo the *λόγος* is not identical with God, but is a product of His self-activity. Thus the *λόγος* is not a complete counterpart of the infinite energy of God ; nor, strictly speaking, is it an expression of what God in His inner nature is, but only an effect, distinct and separate from Him. Philo, in short, applies the conception of external causation to express the relation between God and the *λόγος*. On the basis of his dualism, the *λόγος* cannot be identical with God, because God is absolutely self-contained and therefore cannot be expressed. Now, St. John gives us a very different view. Holding that God is essentially self-manifesting, he employs the current term *λόγος* to express this idea. The *λόγος* is said to be at once "with God" and to "be God." Thus the absolute identity of God and the *λόγος* is affirmed, while yet the *λόγος* is distinguished from God. This can only mean that God manifests himself as *He is* in the *λόγος*. It is, then, in this sense that he speaks of the *λόγος* or *Word*. There can be no doubt that he makes use of the current Hellenistic metaphor

## 246 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

implied in the double meaning of the term *λόγος*, but he adapts it to the expression of the new conception of God as self-manifesting. Thus his conception of the *λόγος* has an entirely different meaning from that of Philo. God's inner nature is fully manifested in the *λόγος*, who is not the product of God, but is God Himself. The mechanical conception of God as a cause distinct from the *λόγος* is set aside, and for it is substituted the conception of God as the eternal self-manifesting God, or, in a word, of God as Spirit.

Philo holds that the *λόγος* was the "instrument" by which the visible world was created; and he expressly compares the world to a vast temple or city, explaining that the *λόγος* was the instrument by which the four elements and their various compounds have been formed. St. John also speaks of the *λόγος* as that through which the world has been made, and so far he seems to be expressing the same idea as Philo. But there is this important difference: that as the *λόγος* is identical with God, it is God *as the λόγος* who has "made the world." Further, the world is not "made" in the sense of being "formed" out of a "matter" already existing, but is brought into being absolutely.

(3) In Philo, the *λόγος* conceived as the Thought of God is distinct from the *λόγος* as the *Word*. The latter is the order and harmony of creation and providence. There is no such distinction in St. John. For him the Word is the expression of God Himself, and it is to the direct agency of God as the *λόγος* that all created things owe their existence. Thus, from whatever point of view we compare them, we find that Philo and St. John, while using the same term, give to it an entirely different meaning. Nor



## PHILO AND THE NEW TESTAMENT 247

must we forget that the metaphor of the *Word* is only a metaphor, and that the fundamental idea which it is employed to express is that God has revealed Himself as He is in the knowable universe, or rather in His Son.

## LECTURE TENTH

### GNOSTIC THEOLOGY

IN my last lecture I endeavoured to show that the resemblances between the New Testament writers and Philo are no proof of direct obligation on the part of the latter, and that, when we go beneath the surface, we find in each a totally different conception of life. The first point of resemblance is in the doctrine of the Logos. In ordinary usage the term *λόγος* means either (*a*) thought, or (*b*) speech. Philo makes use of this double meaning to explain the relation between the intelligible and the sensible world. Thought and speech in man are related to each other as the Divine Thought to its Expression in the visible universe. Thus the *λόγος* is the Word of God, *i.e.* the order impressed upon the sensible world. Therefore man, in grasping by his intelligence the order exhibited in the visible universe, may attain to *truth*, or to a symbolical apprehension of the Divine Thought. The *λόγος* is the "instrument" of creation, while God is its "cause." Hence the visible world is represented as a vast temple or city, the form of which is impressed upon it by the *λόγος*, just as the architect embodies his thought in his work. The *λόγος* is therefore intermediate between God and man; it is "neither unbegotten as God, nor

begotten as man," but is eternally begotten. As the expressed Thought or Word of God, it is called the "eldest" or "first-born Son of God." It is the "bond" of all things, *i.e.* the principle which constitutes the world an ordered system. The *λόγος* or Word is also the law which determines the course of human life. Hence the *λόγος* is called the "man of God" or the "heavenly man," who is distinguished from Adam, the "earthly man." Philo also speaks of the *λόγος* as the "second God," because it is not God as He is in Himself, but the product or "image" of God. There are other ways in which the *λόγος* is characterized, which are drawn from Jewish sources. Thus the *λόγος* is a suppliant or intercessor (*ἱκέτης*) to God on behalf of man. It is natural, therefore, to speak of it as the "high priest," who mediates between God and man. To these striking parallels with the New Testament may be added the *λόγος* as (1) the manna, the bread that came down from heaven, (2) the living stream, (3) the sword that turned every way, or the "divider," (4) the cloud at the Red Sea, (5) the rock in the wilderness. Philo *personifies* the *λόγος*, but he can hardly be said to conceive of it as a *person*. No doubt he identifies it with the angelic or divine appearances mentioned in scripture, but he interprets these as symbols of the Divine Reason. In treating of the kindred notion of the Law, Philo speaks in a way that strongly reminds us of some of St. Paul's ideas. The Law (*νόμος*) is nothing but the Word (*λόγος*); so that the righteous man who keeps the Law also keeps the Word. Philo further tells us that to obey the Law is freedom, while subjection to passion is slavery. The Law he further characterizes as "an eternal law, stamped by the immortal nature on the immortal mind," which reminds us of the Pauline conception

## 250 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of a law written on "the fleshy tables of the heart." The most striking parallel, however, is in the conception of the *λόγος* as the *ἔλεγχος*, the convincer of sin; where the Mosaic law has fallen into the background, and the reason or conscience is viewed as the divine *λόγος*, in so far as it takes up its abode in the soul of man. As to the nature of man, we find that Philo holds the soul to be separate and distinct from the body. This view is connected with the doctrine of the *λόγος* by the idea that in his reason man is an "ectype or fragment or spark of that blessed nature, while in the structure of his body he is connected with the rest of the world." The soul being thus a stranger, dwelling in an alien world, the body is the source of evil, though it is not in itself evil. Hence Philo divides the soul into two parts, one in alliance with the flesh, and the other separate and independent. Corresponding to this division there are two classes of men—those who live in the flesh and those who live in the spirit. As man is by nature corrupt, even a virtuous life is of no avail, unless there is imparted to him the grace by which he is enabled to serve God. There are three ways to the higher life—practice of virtue, teaching and nature. Those who follow the first way are engaged in a never-ending struggle, while those who follow the path of knowledge attain to a higher life, and, compared with the former, feed upon "strong meat," not upon "milk fit for babes." But the highest way of all is that of "nature"; it is the way to peace, the joy of resignation, and purity of heart, and those who enter upon it at last "see God," though only "through a glass." It is also described in such terms as "hungering and thirsting after the ideal God," "hungering after the noble life," "being the slave of

God"; and Philo also calls it the "true riches," adding that there are but "few who find it." Like St. Paul, Philo speaks of faith, hope and love as the fairest graces of the soul, the greatest being love. But, in strong contrast to the Apostle, he believes in the perpetual obligation of the Jewish ceremonial law, though he also speaks of faith as the "most beautiful and blameless sacrifice."

We have now to consider the struggle which Christianity had to undergo in its effort to express Christian ideas in terms of reflective thought—a struggle similar to that through which Philo passed in his effort to preserve the higher elements of Judaism, while incorporating in his system the results of Greek speculation.

"There is a body of men," says Irenaeus, "who set aside the truth, putting in its place fables and vain genealogies, which, as the Apostle says, 'minister questionings, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.'<sup>1</sup> By specious and crafty suggestions they mislead and enslave the unwary. They wickedly pervert the good words of scripture, which they handle deceitfully. They destroy the faith of many, leading them astray by the pretence of 'knowledge' (*γνῶσις*) from Him who has established and adorned the universe, claiming to reveal something higher and greater than God, the Maker of heaven and earth and all that is therein. Plausible in the allurements of rhetorical art, whereby they draw the simple-minded into their method of investigation, they drop the mask and ruin their victims, whom they have reduced to a state of incapacity to distinguish truth from lies by their blasphemous and impious conclusions concerning the Creator."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, *Refutation of Heresy*, Pref. § 1.

## 252 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

These words, with which Irenaeus opens his *Refutation of Heresy*, indicate the main features of the Gnostic sects as they existed in the second century. Their theology was not set forth in a reasoned and connected system, but was imbedded in a fantastic cosmogony ; their exegesis was of that artificial character with which our study of Philo has made us familiar ; they claimed to be in possession of an esoteric doctrine or Gnosis, revealed only to the initiated ; and between the Supreme Being and the world they interposed a number of spiritual Powers or Aeons, attributing the creation of the visible universe to a subordinate agent, the Demiurge. That a doctrine of this kind was inconsistent with the fundamental ideas of Christian theology, and in practice led either to an antinomian license or to asceticism, is also true ; and therefore we cannot but sympathize with the zeal of the Bishop of Lyons, when he warns his flock against these "wolves in sheep's clothing," as he does not hesitate to call them. But, while it is true that Gnosticism was fantastic in form, arbitrary in the interpretation of scripture, full of intellectual arrogance and dualistic in content, it was not, at least in its main representatives, either so unchristian or so irrational as Irenaeus alleges, nor can it be fairly stigmatised as a deliberate and wicked perversion of the "truth once delivered to the saints." When the Gnostics wrote there was no fixed body of Christian doctrine of which the Church was the custodian, and therefore no "heresy" in the later sense of deviation from the Catholic faith. Even in the age of Irenaeus the dogmas of the Church were still in process of formation, and, judged by the standard of the Nicene Creed, Irenaeus himself must be pronounced heretical. The Church afterwards accepted as orthodox those writers of the first and second

centuries who employed speculation as a means of spiritualizing the Old Testament, without carrying their speculation so far as to construct a complete system; while it branded as heretical those thinkers who, employing the same method, aimed at completeness and reached conclusions at variance with later Catholic doctrine. Both classes of thinkers were under the influence of Greek ideas and Greek modes of thought, and both were trying to convert Christian faith into a philosophy of religion. In attempting to estimate the strength and weakness of Gnosticism we must discard the idea that it was a perversion of accepted doctrine, and view it as an honest attempt to show that Christianity was the ultimate and universal religion. The aberrations of the Gnostics were the natural and inevitable result of the acceptance of the Christian faith by men whose minds were already filled with Greek ideas of life, and who felt the need of harmonizing with the new revelation the knowledge they already believed themselves to possess. The Christian faith as proclaimed by our Lord involved a higher conception of the relations of God and man than that which had been reached even by the later Hebrew prophets, but its universal spirit was not yet freed from features due to its Jewish origin. The consequence was that by the primitive Jewish community of Christians it was held in a form which was coloured by traditional modes of thought. The main struggle of the Apostolic age was to liberate the spirit of Christianity from the natural preconceptions of its Jewish adherents,—a work which was begun by St. Paul and carried out by the writer of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> But the process could not stop here. Even in the Apostolic age, Christianity found itself con-

<sup>1</sup>The writer of the Fourth Gospel has in his mind Alexandrian Judaism.

## 254 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

fronted with believers who brought to it preconceptions derived originally from Babylonian, Persian and other oriental sources, and the danger which it had already experienced of losing its universality from the survival of Jewish beliefs, threatened it from this new source. Evidences of this conflict meet us in the New Testament itself, especially in the Epistle to the Colossians and the Revelation of St. John. A new danger emerged when Christianity was embraced by men who had been trained in the Hellenic philosophy of Alexandria. To this class belonged the great Gnostics of the second century, who attempted to reconcile Jewish, Oriental, Greek and Christian ideas, mainly by weapons borrowed from Greek philosophy. Their syncretistic method could not possibly yield a satisfactory philosophy of religion, but they must get the credit of forcing the problem to the front, and doing their best to solve it. While, therefore, we do justice to writers like Irenaeus, who instinctively revolted against the dualism by which Gnosticism was largely infected, we must not forget that 'but for the Gnostics a Christian philosophy of religion would have been impossible. Grant to Irenaeus what he never doubts for a moment, that the conception of Christianity held by the majority of the Churches in his day was identical with the faith of our Lord and His disciples, and that the salvation of man depended upon its implicit acceptance, and we can understand why he was unable to account for its rejection by honest and fair-minded men except on the hypothesis that they were perverse and wicked sophists.<sup>1</sup> The Gnostics he therefore pictured to himself as a class of men who wilfully and sinfully rejected the truth, and with a malignant ingenuity sought to destroy the souls of their simple-minded

To Justin Martyr Gnosticism is the work of daemons.

dupes. Instead of accepting the plain sense of scripture, they constructed a colossal edifice of speculation which only tended to overlay and obscure the Gospel. All such speculations seemed to Irenaeus reprehensible, not merely because they would not bear criticism, but because they *were* speculations. It is true that the Gnostics pretended to find their doctrines in scripture ; but this was, to his mind, merely a pretext to conceal the real character of their doctrine. Their object was to destroy the souls of men, and the elaborate rhetorical arts by which they sought to effect their evil purpose were only a cloak for their perversity and wickedness. Who but wicked men would dethrone God and put in His place their absurd conception of the Demiurge ? Having formed such an image of the Gnostics, it is not surprising that the shrewd but unspeculative Bishop was unable to take a fair and judicial view of their doctrines.

Now, of course, no blame can be attached to Irenaeus for his vigorous polemic against the Gnostics. The view that all speculation on divine things is hurtful is not so unknown in our own day that we should be surprised to find it in a Bishop of the second century, whose main interest was in the saving of souls, a task for which he was eminently qualified by his zeal and strong practical sense. But, while this is true, it is just as undeniable that his temper was of the hard and limited type which made it impossible for him to appreciate the efforts of more reflective minds to bring the principles of the Christian faith into connexion with a comprehensive theory of the world. The experience of nineteen centuries has taught us to view the movements of the early centuries in their relation to the past and the future ; we now recognize that, while Christianity is based upon a

## 256 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

universal principle, that principle is not capable of being imprisoned in a few simple truths, but, just because it is a living thing, must be enriched by all the elements with which it comes in contact. To identify Christianity with its first simple form, and reject its later developments merely because they are later, is as unjustifiable as to prefer the germ to the full-grown plant. We must, therefore, approach the study of Gnosticism with the object of discovering how far, in the wild whirl of conflicting ideas—Jewish, Syrian, Babylonian, Persian and Greek—which was characteristic of the age in which it appeared, it prepared the way for a more perfect system of theology than itself. We are in no danger of becoming Gnostics of the fantastic type which flourished in the early centuries of our era, but we may be in danger of coming under the influence of its modern representatives; and in any case it will do us no harm to study impartially the early struggle of Christian men to “give a reason for the faith that was in them.” The vagaries of Gnostic speculation are at first sight strange and almost inexplicable, and, indeed, no human being but a philosophical Dryasdust can now take the least interest in the details, some of them absurd in the extreme, of their multifarious systems. I do not, however, propose to burden you with these details further than is necessary; it will be enough to deal with the more important developments of this early phase of theological speculation, in their relation to the main current of doctrine, which gradually gained for itself the sanction of the Church.

The term “Gnosticism” is sometimes used in a wider, sometimes in a narrower sense. A recent writer tells us that “Gnosticism is a religious movement which is characterized by a seeking for Gnosis or enlighten-

ment for the purpose of finding salvation."<sup>1</sup> Taken in this sense Gnosticism is older than Christianity, and may be said to make its appearance with the Essenes, who can be traced back to the second century before the Christian era.<sup>2</sup> In the more restricted sense of the term, however, Gnosticism is an early form of Christianity, which makes its appearance even in the Apostolic Age, but only becomes a clearly marked method of thought in the second century, under the influence of Hellenic philosophy. Our subject is Gnosticism in this second and generally accepted sense, and it will be convenient to consider it in three successive phases, as it presents itself in the first, second and third centuries respectively. These three phases may also be characterized as, Judaic, Hellenic and Syriac Gnosticism. It will still further simplify matters, if we set aside a number of systems or views which have one or more features in common with the main Gnostic systems, but which had little or no influence upon the general current of theological speculation. I shall therefore simply mention these, shortly, without further entering into them.

✓ First of all we have the *Encratites*, who attached supreme importance to the ascetic life, for which they claimed the example of Christ. ✓ Next may be mentioned the *Docetists*, who drew their ideas from writings in which it was denied that Christ was a real man, their view being that he was a heavenly spirit with a phantasmal body. Then we have, thirdly, the *Carpocratians*, whose doctrine was based upon a literal interpretation of the Platonic idea of reminiscence (*ἀνάμνησις*) and the pre-existence of souls. The world,

<sup>1</sup> Carus in the *Movist* for July, 1898, p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> For a valuable account of the Essenes, see Lightfoot's *Colossians and Philemon*, pp. 83-93.

## 258 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

on their view, is not the work of God, but of inferior spirits; and the true Gnosis is attained by those who are able to recall the ideas which they had in a pre-existent state, and are thus favoured with the vision of the Supreme Unity. The superiority of Jesus over other men they attributed to the unusual strength of his "reminiscence" and the consequent spiritual excellence and power to which he thus attained. There seems little doubt that some members of this sect fell into theoretical and practical Antinomianism; the speculative basis of their doctrine, as attributed to Epiphanes, the son of Carpocrates, being that external actions do not affect the spirit and are therefore morally indifferent. In any case the Carpocratians adopted the Communism suggested in the Republic of Plato. Jesus they honoured as the greatest philosopher, setting up his statue side by side with the statues of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle. Besides these sects there was a number of adventurers—magicians, prophe-siers, and alchemists,—who affected the usual jargon of their tribe, and employed magical incantations as a means of duping the public and robbing women of their honour. In contrast to these extreme sects, which were Pagan rather than Christian, there was also a variety of sects which only differed slightly from the Christianity of ordinary believers. Having thus cleared the way, we may go on to consider Gnosticism in its first phase, or Judaic Gnosticism.

### I. JUDAIC GNOSTICISM.

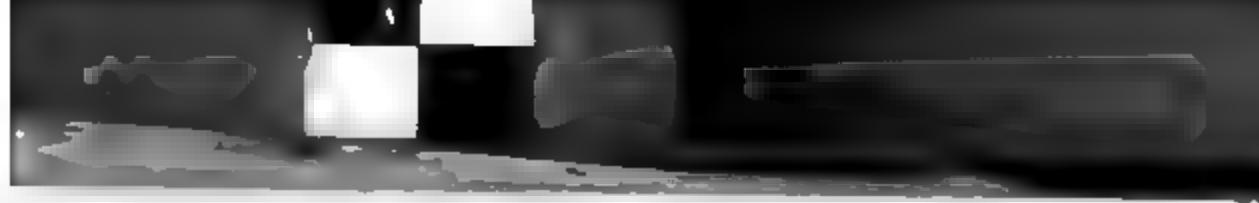
The most palpable traces of this Earliest form of Christian Gnosticism are found in the Epistle to the Colossians.<sup>1</sup> The Apostle warns the Christian not to

<sup>1</sup>Col. ii. 4, 8, 9, 18, 23.

be misled by the false teachers who threatened to destroy the purity of Christian faith and practice. These teachers insisted upon the observance of Sabbaths and new moons, upon the distinction of meats and drinks, and apparently upon the initiatory rite of circumcision. This, of course, indicates that they were Jews, who had found their homes in the valley of the Lycus, and were unable to free themselves from their faith in Jewish observances and ritual. But they were not Jews of the ordinary type, as we immediately see from the epistle, for the Apostle goes on to mention three features which are not Jewish, but Gnostic. In the first place these Jewish-Christians plumed themselves upon a hidden wisdom and exclusive mysteries, and claimed the special illumination of a privileged class. Knowing, as we do, the Apostle's universalism, it is not difficult to understand his vigorous protest against this new particularism. Just as he had in earlier epistles given no quarter to *national* exclusiveness, so he now denounces this new enemy, *intellectual* exclusiveness. The true Gnosis, as he insists, is no "mystery," revealed only to a privileged few, but is open to all men who have faith in Christ. The false teachers set up a "philosophy" which he characterizes as an "empty deceit" based upon "sophistry."<sup>1</sup> The "wisdom" to which they lay claim might deceive many, but it was not the "wisdom" of the Gospel. The rites of initiation which they practised were diametrically opposed to the one universal "mystery," the knowledge of God in Christ, which, as he declares, contained "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in it."<sup>2</sup> Here is no "mystery," revealed only to a few, but an "open secret," manifest to all who are

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 2-3.



## 260 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

not prevented by waywardness and disobedience from receiving it. Secondly, the Apostle objects to the cosmology and theology of the false teachers. It is implied that they attributed the work of creation to angels, instead of to the one Eternal Son, the Word of God, "through whom and to whom all things have been created." St. Paul also stigmatizes the worship of angels as a false "humility," which is wrong in principle.<sup>1</sup> The idea that man may mount to God by the ladder of intermediate beings is mere sophistry, and is subversive of the mediatorial work of Christ. In Christ dwells the "fulness" ( $\piληρωμα$ ) of God, and through him alone it is communicated to man.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, the Apostle objects to the *asceticism* of the false teachers, which was advocated by them as a means of "checking the indulgence of the flesh."<sup>3</sup> This end it entirely failed to accomplish, and he maintains that the true remedy consists in spiritualizing the passions by a living faith—by dying with Christ and rising again with him, and thereby renewing the image of God in the soul.

There can be no doubt, then, that in the false teaching referred to in the Epistle to the Colossians we come upon an incipient Gnosticism. Even in the Apostolic age there was a tendency to lose the central idea of Christianity in an esoteric doctrine, in vague mystical speculations and in asceticism. The vigorous protest of the Apostle was, however, unsuccessful in arresting the growth of Gnosticism, even in the churches of the Lycus, as we see from the denunciations of the Apocalypse, though in the second century it assumed a different form. The transition from the earlier to the later form we find in the doctrine of Cerinthus,<sup>4</sup> who even in point of time

<sup>1</sup>Col. ii. 18.    <sup>2</sup>Col. ii. 9ff.    <sup>3</sup>Col. iii. 23.    <sup>4</sup>Flourished 98-117.



## GNOSTIC THEOLOGY

261

forms the link between the Gnosticism of the first and the Gnosticism of the second century.

"Cerinthus," Irenaeus tells us, "taught that the world was not made by the highest God, but by a Power far removed from, and ignorant of, this Supreme Being."<sup>1</sup> As we learn from other authorities, he held the universe to have been created, not by a single power, but by a number of powers. It is also stated that, in his view, the Mosaic Law was given, not by the supreme God, but by the angel, or one of the angels, who created the world. The Christology of Cerinthus is also Gnostic. Like the Ebionites he "maintained that Jesus was born in the natural way, though he excelled all other men in righteousness, intelligence and wisdom. Cerinthus further held that after his baptism the Christ, descending upon Jesus from the Supreme Ruler in the form of a dove, revealed to him the unknown Father and worked miracles through him, but at last took flight and left him, so that Jesus alone suffered and rose again, while the Christ, as a spiritual being, remained without suffering."<sup>2</sup>

In this account of the doctrine of Cerinthus we find a feature which reappears in all subsequent Gnostic systems, the conception that the world was not made by God Himself, but by a subordinate agent. The earlier conception of Jewish Christianity, as held by the Ebionites, did not differ from the current Jewish view that the world was the work of God. Cerinthus has departed from this view so far as to ascribe creation to a being lower than God; but, on the other hand, he conceives of this being, after the later Jewish fashion, as an angel, not as a spiritual power or Aeon. Thus his doctrine is evidently in process

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *Refutation of Heresy*, I. xxvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* I. xxvi. 1.

## 262 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of transition from the Judaic to the later Gnostic doctrine. And as the creator of the world is said to be "far removed" from the supreme God, we must suppose that Cerinthus held, more or less definitely, the Gnostic theory of a number of intermediate agencies, though he still conceived of these as angels, not as emanations. Lastly, Cerinthus agrees with later Gnostics in representing the Demiurge as also the giver of the Mosaic Law, but he differs from them in merely ascribing ignorance to him, while his successors represent him as antagonistic to the supreme and good God.

Now, it seems at first sight as if Cerinthus, in his conception of an angelic creator, had fallen back upon a lower conception than that of the Ebionites, who held fast by the conception of God as the creator of the universe. But we must distinguish between the uncritical acceptance of a traditional belief and the first imperfect effort to transcend it. The Ebionites simply accepted the common anthropomorphic idea that the heavens and the earth are the work of God's hands, just as they clung to circumcision and were strict observers of the Jewish ceremonial law. They were only half liberated from Judaism, and therefore they did not perceive that the Christian conception of a self-revealing God was not identical with the traditional Jewish conception. We can therefore understand why they accepted only the Gospel of Matthew, and rejected the teaching of Paul. Nor must we forget that the Pauline conception of the Son of God as the creator of the world must have seemed to them hardly less objectionable than the angelic Demiurge of Cerinthus. We must therefore be prepared to see in the doctrine of Cerinthus, imperfect as it is, an advance upon the doctrine of the ordinary Jewish Christians. What,

then, led Cerinthus to deny the direct creation of the world by the supreme God, and to attribute it to an angelic Demiurge? Partly no doubt it was logically necessitated by the reflective movement of the time towards a purely abstract conception of God, a conception which, as we see from Philo, was explicitly developed in the Alexandrian school of Jewish philosophy. In the revolt from anthropomorphic modes of conceiving the Supreme Being, God was raised so high above all knowable reality, that the difficulty was to find any mediation between Him and the world. In this strait the belief in angels of later Judaism seemed to offer a means of connecting the Infinite with the Finite. Alexandrian Judaism solved the difficulty by hypostatizing the attributes of God as spiritual powers, through whose agency the world was formed. The way for this doctrine had been prepared by later Judaism in the books which personified Wisdom as the daughter of God, and even the Septuagint sought to preserve the spirituality and independence of God by representing Him as acting indirectly through angelic ministers. Cerinthus rather inclined to this latter view than to the more abstract conception of Philo, adopting a compromise between the old and the new, in which the purified conception of God was combined with the angelology of later Judaism. This illogical doctrine, in which God was viewed as at once the Author of all things and yet as inactive, could not long be accepted, and hence later Gnostics carried out the movement towards a more spiritual conception of the universe by transforming the angels of Cerinthus into ideal powers or Acons, while preserving the separateness of God from the world and the creative activity of the subordinate agents. To this second phase of Gnosticism attention must now be directed.

## II. HELLENIC GNOSTICISM

The main leaders of Gnosticism in the second century, while they retain the characteristics we have found exhibited by the "false teachers" among the Colossians and by Cerinthus, differ in being largely influenced by Greek ideas and modes of thought. This inevitably gave a new character to their speculations. Greek thought had for centuries occupied itself with the problem of explaining the origin of the world, and the principles which underlie the various forms of being and of human society. Early Greek philosophy turned against the anthropomorphism and polytheism of the traditional mythology, and this movement finally resulted, in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, in a pure speculative Monotheism and in a closely reasoned system of ideas, embracing the whole wealth of knowledge as it then existed. In its later phases Greek philosophy had come to despair of a solution of the riddle of existence by the normal exercise of reason. But, even when a basis for truth was sought in religious intuition, the Greek tendency to intellectual clearness led to the attempt to construct a system of ideas, in which the reflective intellect could feel itself at home. Christianity, with its new revelation of the nature of God and man, compelled thinkers who had been trained in the Greek schools to seek for a view which should solve the problems raised by philosophy, and it was inevitable that the attempt should be made to bring the new ideas into harmony with the preconceptions by which they were dominated. To them Christianity presented itself, not merely as a religion, but as a divine philosophy, and in it, as they assumed, was to be found a complete answer to the problems which philosophy had in vain

attempted to solve. But the Gospel was Jewish in its origin, and had been presented by St. Paul as at once a fulfilment and an abrogation of the whole Mosaic Law. The problem therefore arose to determine the relation of the Jewish religion to Christianity. St. Paul had put forward the illuminating conception of the Law as a divine preparation for the Gospel, and, by the aid of this reconciling idea, had extracted from the Old Testament a testimony to the transitional character of the whole Mosaic dispensation, while he had also seen in the death and resurrection of Jesus a revelation of the divine nature. In his interpretation of the sacred records the Apostle employed the prevalent allegorical method which had originated in Greece, but always in subordination to the central ideas of Christianity; and in this way he was enabled to reconcile the Jewish converts to Christianity without destroying their reverence for the Old Testament as the revelation of God. But St. Paul's training had been rabbinical, though he was not entirely uninfluenced by Greek modes of thought, and hence men like the Gnostics, whose training had been of a different type, came to the Old Testament from a different point of view. They admitted its divine authority, but they found in it a hidden philosophy. It was to them, as to Philo, by whom they were largely influenced, a symbolic account of the liberation of the spirit from the bondage of nature. This was the method by which they were enabled to retain the Old Testament as a Christian book, and yet to affirm that Christianity was an entirely new revelation. Preparation had already been made for this view in the transformation which later Judaism had undergone under the influence of Babylonian and Persian ideas, as well as of later Jewish speculation, which

## 266 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

was already dominated by Greek ideas. Like Philo, the Gnostics found a solvent for the difficulties involved in the literal interpretation of the Old Testament in the allegorical method of exegesis, which was as much a legacy from Greece as the positive ideas due to Greek philosophy. In support of this method they could appeal to St. Paul and other New Testament writers. By the aid of this potent instrument, even the historical records of the Old Testament, not to speak of its other contents, could be interpreted as symbols of hidden truth. Instead of apocalyptic dreams of a Messianic kingdom, the Gnostics substituted a mystical philosophy, in which the centre of interest was transferred from the ordinary world in which men live to a vague spiritual realm of personified abstractions. But this transforming process could not stop with the Old Testament. In the second century the writings of the New Testament were accepted as a divine revelation, certainly not inferior to those of the Old Testament, and to them was applied the same method of exegesis, so that the birth, life, passion and ascension of the Lord were interpreted as symbols of a great world-process. Thus arose those fantastic creations of Hellenic Gnosticism, in which an attempt was made to find a solution of the problems of philosophy in a mystical interpretation of the sacred records. And when it was once admitted that Christianity in its inner essence could only be understood by those who possessed the inner light which enabled them to interpret the hidden meaning of scripture, it was an obvious inference that only those who were endowed with this faculty were capable of that special Gnosis or illumination in which salvation was supposed to consist, though at least some of the Gnostic schools were willing to allow a

certain measure of illumination to the ordinary Christian.

Now, though the Church refused to accept the solutions proposed by the Gnostics, it has never rejected the problem which they were the first to formulate or the method which they employed in its solution. The Gnostics are the first Christian theologians, or rather the first Christian theologians who sought to construct a theology on the basis of revelation after the model of Greek philosophy and by the use of the Greek allegorical exegesis. The problem and the method were dictated by the stage of thought at which the world had arrived, and neither the one nor the other was rejected by the Church, nor was the Church uninfluenced by Gnostic ideas, even when these were untenable. Hence we cannot but sympathize with the problem which the Gnostics were attempting to solve. Convinced that Christianity was the universal religion, they attempted to set forth its fundamental ideas in their systematic connexion. No doubt their method and the results reached by them were very inadequate as an expression of the essence of Christianity; but nothing else could be expected from men who lived before theology had begun to take a definite shape. To them belongs the credit of seeking to interpret all the knowledge, or supposed knowledge, of their time in the light of Christianity, a task which the theologian does not always attempt. Let us then see what results these initiators of theological science reached in their attempt to construct a comprehensive religious philosophy. Certainly their systems were arbitrary and fantastic enough, but we may be certain that they had some rational meaning, and were an effort to explain problems with which we are still occupied.

## 268 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

As Gnosticism was essentially a philosophy of religion, it began with the conception of God, then attempted to explain the origin of the world with its finitude and evil by the hypothesis of emanation, and concluded with an account of the restoration of man to unity with God. It is thus evident that Gnosticism makes no attempt to advance from the nature of the world as known to us to the ultimate principle of all things, but starts with the ultimate principle and proceeds to deduce the various forms of existence from it. The objection which at once suggests itself to this whole method of procedure is that it begins by assuming the idea of God, instead of showing that that idea is necessarily presupposed by the contents of our experience. And there can be no doubt that the Gnostics, instead of seeking to discover the true nature of God by an examination of the nature of the knowable world, started with the preconception of God as absolutely complete in Himself apart from and independently of the world. This indeed was inevitable in a philosophy which was based, not upon the interpretation by reason of what was known, but upon a revelation which transcended reason. It must be observed, however, that the Gnostics were led to adopt this method by the whole movement of the age. By the development of the religious consciousness in Greece, the conception of God had been purified from anthropomorphism and polytheism, and by a parallel development among the Jews God had come to be conceived as the God of the whole universe; and hence the Gnostics naturally started from the point of view of pure Monotheism. Moreover, the Jewish-Alexandrian philosophy had exalted God so far above the world that Philo was led to declare that He was absolutely incomprehensible.

sible by the human intelligence. / The Gnostics therefore naturally assumed the conception of God which had thus been reached in their day, and their problem was to explain the relation of God to the world, and especially to man. These considerations may explain why the Gnostics start from the conception of God, whom they consider as raised infinitely above all particular forms of being. We shall best understand the character of their theology by a comparison of the two main representatives of Hellenic Gnosticism, Valentinus and Basilides.<sup>1</sup>

Before there was any created being, Valentinus maintained, existed the Original Father, whom he also calls the Depth, absolutely alone, uncreated, without place, without time, without Counsellor or any other Being that we can in any way conceive. Here it will be observed that the predicates by which the absolute is characterized are entirely negative. God is *not* created, *not* in space, *not* in time, *not* related to any other being. But, while Valentinus denies that we can attribute any positive qualities to the Divine Being, his use of the term *Depth* indicates that he was led to deny all positive predicates of the Absolute from his conviction of the infinite and inexhaustible completeness of the divine nature. Thus in the mind of Valentinus two opposite conceptions are combined without any consciousness on his part that they are mutually exclusive. The absolutely indeterminate Being is at the same time the infinitely determinate Being. Like Philo and Spinoza, Valentinus denies that God can be defined, not because He is absolutely simple, but because of the transcendent fulness of His being. It would seem, however, from the account of Irenaeus, that there were followers of Valentinus who

<sup>1</sup> Valentinus d. circ. 160; Basilides fl. circ. 120.

## 270 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

sought to push the negative conception of God to its utter extreme, and who therefore denied that even "being" could be predicated of the Absolute. And obviously this is the logical consequence of the denial of all positive predicates, among which "being" must be placed. This sect of Valentinians may have been influenced by Basilides, who was a more consistent thinker than his contemporary Valentinus, though perhaps for that very reason he had fewer adherents. We have, therefore, in Basilides the purest expression of the Gnostic conception of God. Here is the account given by Hippolytus of his doctrine.

"There was a time when there was nothing ; and when I say 'nothing,' says Basilides, I mean to express in plain and unambiguous language, without equivocation of any kind, the idea that there was absolutely no being whatever. I have, indeed, made use of the term 'being' in saying that there 'was' nothing, but I employ the word only in a symbolical sense. Let it be clearly understood, then, that nothing whatever was. No doubt even this statement is inadequate ; for, even in saying that the First Principle is 'inexpressible,' we imply that it is not altogether 'inexpressible.' But what I mean is, that there is no term by which it can be expressed, and therefore that it cannot even be said to be 'inexpressible.' Even when we are speaking of the known world, we find that language is unable to characterize the infinite differences of things ; for it is impossible to find precise terms for all things, and, though we can comprehend the distinctive character of things by thought, we are forced to employ current terms, having no proper words by which to designate them. This ambiguity in the use of words has produced perplexity and confusion in the minds of the

uncultured. . . . There was, then, nothing, neither matter, nor substance, nor that which is non-substantial, neither the simple nor the complex, neither the unthought nor the unperceived, neither man, nor angel, nor God—in short, nothing whatever that can be named or perceived or thought. The God who was not (*οὐκ ὁρῶθεός*), being without thought, without perception, without will, without purpose, without passion, without desire, willed to make a world. I say 'willed,' however, merely because I am forced to use some word, but I mean that the God who was not 'willed' without volition, without thought, without perception; and when I say 'world,' I do not mean the extended and divisible world which afterwards came into being, with its capacity of division, but the cosmical seed (*σπέρμα κόσμου*). This 'seed' contained all things within itself, just as the seed of the mustard plant contains in minute form all at once roots, branches, leaves and the innumerable seeds of future plants. Thus the God that was not made the world that was not out of what was not."<sup>1</sup>

Basilides, as you will see from this quotation, has the courage of his convictions. It would be difficult to express more fully the idea of the absolute transcendence and inscrutability of God, or the logical consequences of that idea. In considering the doctrine of Philo we came across a similar view, for Philo also maintains that it is impossible for man to comprehend the inner nature of God. But Philo, while he denies that we can predicate anything of God as He is in Himself, yet affirms that we can say that He *is*. Basilides is more consistent. Since God is absolutely incomprehensible and inexpressible, we must refuse even to say that He *is*. For, to say that God *is*, or *was* before the

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, VII. 20-21.

## 272 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

creation of the world, is to apply to the Infinite a predicate which has meaning only in its application to the finite. Borrowing an argument common in the Peripatetic school of thinkers, Basilides seeks to show that the human mind cannot even adequately conceive or name the finite; and therefore, as he implies, it is not surprising that it cannot comprehend or express the nature of the Infinite.

In this doctrine of Basilides we have the first clear and unambiguous expression of a view which has exercised a very great influence upon Christian theology. That God absolutely transcends all knowable forms of being, and as a consequence is inconceivable and inexpressible, is a doctrine which, as Hatch points out, "was adopted at the end of the second century by the Christian philosophers of the Alexandrian schools, who inherited the wealth at once of regenerated Platonism, of Gnosticism, and of Theosophic Judaism."<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, for example, affirms that God is "beyond the One and higher than the Monad itself." He cannot be named; we cannot say that He is "the One, or the Good, or Mind, or Absolute Being, or Father, or Creator, or Lord."

Now, the whole conception of God as transcending the knowable world is based upon the assumption that He is absolutely complete in Himself prior to, or independently of, the universe. It is not difficult to understand how the first Christian theologians should have been led to adopt this view. Christianity was a development out of Judaism by the application of later Greek ideas, and therefore it naturally insisted strongly upon the infinite perfection of God. It is true that while in the earliest Christian teaching God is conceived of as invisible, He is not thought of as a

<sup>1</sup> Hatch's *Influence of Greek Ideas*, p. 255.

purely Spiritual Being ; but it was inevitable that, with the rise of speculation, He should be conceived, if not as transcending all knowable forms of being, at least as existing beyond the visible universe ; and when it was seen that God cannot be limited by space and time, the natural inference was drawn, that He is not only infinite, but is incomprehensible by the human intelligence in its normal exercise. Nor can there be any doubt that the first Christian theologians were influenced by such writers as Philo, who had already partially effected the combination of Jewish and Greek conceptions. Basilides, in his conception of " the God who was not," *i.e.*, the God who was still wrapped up in Himself and had not as yet created the visible universe, was only expressing the logical result of the negative movement from the world to God. But, when God is conceived of as beyond the world and as different in His essence from all that is known by us, He necessarily becomes a purely indeterminate Being, of whom nothing can be said.

Now it would be a great mistake to undervalue the importance of this negative movement. As the source and principle of all being, God cannot be identified with any particular form of being. He cannot be simply one being existing side by side with others, but must be conceived as in some sense comprehending within Himself all that is, and therefore as in His essence higher than the highest of the beings whose existence is dependent upon Him. But, while this is true, the transcendence of God cannot be admitted in the sense in which it was held by theologians like Basilides, unless we are prepared to admit that of God we know absolutely nothing. Yet this is the inevitable result of a self-consistent doctrine of the absolute transcendence of God. As Basilides says, no predicate whatever, not

## 274 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

even the predicate of "being," can be applied in determination of that which is defined to be absolutely indefinable; and not only so, but we can make no assertion whatever about God, nor form even the faintest idea of His nature. Thus the name *God* comes to be little more than the deification of the word "not," and we are reduced to a condition of blank unconsciousness and utter speechlessness.

The motive for the purification of the idea of God from all the predicates by which we characterize known objects was undoubtedly a recognition of the absolute perfection of God. As Basilides maintains, the world as known to us is infinitely complex. No two things are precisely the same, or, in other words, each thing has its own individuality and is marked off from all other things. Our conceptions of things, and the names which we apply to them, only express what is common to all the members of a class, not what is characteristic of each. It is impossible to define, and therefore impossible to name the individual, and we have to content ourselves with class names, which leave out all that is peculiar to each. We should only express adequately the nature of each thing if we had a special name for each, and indeed for each of the infinity of changes through which each thing passes. Hence thought, and language as its expression, is inadequate to the infinite multiplicity of objects and events. Now, this argument, if pressed to its logical conclusion, would seem to mean, when applied to God, that we cannot think or express the divine nature, because the very essence of thought and speech is to deal with the abstract, whereas God is infinitely concrete. And there is no doubt that, behind the denial of Basilides and others that God can be conceived, lies the idea that He is infinitely deter-

minate.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the explicit doctrine of Basilides is that God is absolutely indeterminate, and therefore cannot be conceived or expressed. Now, these two conceptions are obviously antithetical and irreconcilable; God cannot be at once infinitely determinate and absolutely indeterminate, and we must make clear to ourselves which conception we propose to adopt, before we can advance a step in the construction of a true theology.

As none of the predicates by which existence is characterized are applicable to the Absolute, Basilides naturally denies that we can speak of God as thinking, perceiving or willing. Taken strictly, this would mean that God has no definite nature. But Basilides undoubtedly rather means to affirm that in God all real distinctions cease to be distinctions and are resolved into unity. Perhaps the following considerations may help us to understand how he was led, in his endeavour to preserve the absoluteness of God, to deny of Him thought, perception and will. The thought of anything, as exercised by us, seems to presuppose the independent existence of that about which we think. Thought, as we have already seen, was conceived by Basilides as an abstraction from the infinite variety of objects, qualities and events presented in experience. We fix our attention, as he supposed, upon the *common* element in a number of objects, and let drop the points in which they differ, and therefore thought can never take up into itself the nature of things. Now, if this is the nature of thought, it cannot be predicated of God, because we should be maintaining that objects existed prior to and independent of God, and that God could not even comprehend the whole nature of those objects. Against such a doctrine Basilides protests. God is

## 276 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

absolute, and there can exist nothing apart from Him, and certainly nothing which He does not completely comprehend. If we say that God is a thinking being, we must suppose Him to think a world which already exists independently of Him, and to think it imperfectly. Hence the nature of God must be such that it transcends thought. Nor can we predicate perception of God; for though perception, unlike thought, comes into direct contact with things and their qualities, it does not create the objects it apprehends, and it has this peculiar defect, that it never deals with the whole, but only with a part. Perception, in other words, cannot create its objects, nor can it comprehend existence in its completeness. But God must be creative of all things, and therefore He can never be described as exercising a receptive faculty like perception. Lastly, *will* cannot be ascribed to God, because volition as we experience it in ourselves—and we know of no other—is the process by which we seek to complete our being by a transition into a new state; whereas God must be eternally complete. It was from such considerations as these that Basilides was led to deny thought, perception and will of God. He denied these predicates of God, because they seemed to him to destroy the unity and perfection of His nature, which must transcend all such limited forms of existence.

But, while it was the intention of Basilides to preserve the absolute perfection of God by denying of Him thought, perception and will, the logical result of his doctrine was to empty the conception of God of all meaning. He confuses the distinction of thought, perception and will, and the distinction of subject and object, with their absolute separation. It is quite true that in God thought, perception and will cannot

be separate modes of activity ; but it is not true that the Divine Intelligence can be devoid of all distinction. It must be admitted that in God there can be no absolute separation between that which He is and that which He knows ; but it is not true that there is within His nature no distinction between subject and object. That Intelligence is perfect in which all distinctions are the expression of unity, and there can be no Intelligence where there is no distinction of subject and object. God must be conceived as self-conscious Intelligence or Spirit, unless we are to fall back upon a purely indeterminate Being, blindly originating existence. Basilides is himself forced to admit that we have to think and speak of God as "willing"; but he seeks to avoid the consequences of this admission by saying that the term *will* is applied to God only in an analogical or symbolical sense. But this only conceals the inner contradiction of his doctrine. If "will" is employed in an analogical sense, we must at least know that with which it is contrasted. We cannot know that "will" is in any sense applicable to God, unless we know how far it is true, and how far false. Thus we are reduced to the dilemma: If we know what in God corresponds to "will," we must be able to comprehend the nature of God ; if we do not, we cannot know that there is any correspondence whatever.

## LECTURE ELEVENTH

### **GNOSTIC THEOLOGY (*Concluded*)**

THE Gnostic conception of God, as absolutely complete in Himself prior to and independent of the world, obviously made the existence of the world a difficult problem. Carried out to its logical result, the doctrine would have led to the conclusion that the whole finite universe has no true reality, but is an illusion due to the imperfection of our human mode of conceiving the absolute. But this oriental idea, though it left its impress upon Gnostic speculation, was inconsistent with the Jewish, Greek and Christian modes of conception, and therefore the Gnostics sought at once to maintain the absoluteness of God, and to account for the origination of a world which was infected with finitude and evil. To them it seemed manifest that the world contained an element of imperfection, while yet every order of being was continually striving after the primal source of all being. The problem which presented itself to their minds was to account for the creation of an imperfect universe by a perfect God. The answer which they gave was to attribute the creation of the world, not to the supreme God, but to a subordinate agent. By the device of a series of intermediate "aeons" or "powers," the perfection

of the Absolute seemed to be preserved while yet the origination of an imperfect world was explained. The first step in the descent from the Absolute was the production by emanation of the spiritual essence composing the first realm of existence, the Ogdoad or super-celestial region. The Gnostics did not agree with each other in the names and number of the "aeons" or "powers" which constituted the sum of the heavenly essences, but they were at one in distinguishing the super-celestial region or Pleroma from the celestial and the earthly realms. Valentinus, though he had spoken of God as the inconceivable Depth, yet employs the conception of a dual principle, an active and a passive, analogous to the distinction of male and female, in his attempt to explain the successive emanations from the Divine Being. The essential nature of the Original Father was Love, and as Love demands an object there flowed forth from the unfathomable Depth the dual principle of Reason (*Noûs*) and Truth (*'Αλήθεια*), from which arose Thought (*Δόγμα*) and Life (*Zōē*), while from these again proceeded the archetypal Man (*'Ανθρώπος*) and Church (*'Εκκλησία*), and these last gave rise to twelve aeons, the most important of which was the female aeon (*Σοφία*). The details of this scheme are obviously arbitrary. Valentinus obtained his "aeons" by hypothesizing abstract distinctions, derived partly from Greek philosophy, partly from oriental sources, and partly from Christianity. Setting aside the pictorial form of the doctrine, what Valentinus seems to mean is that the Original Father, by His self-limitation, originated a number of partial manifestations of Himself. The Pleroma is thus the revelation, but not the complete revelation, of the inner nature of God. There is in the conception of God as Love and as self-manifesting,

## 280 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

a distinctively Christian element, shrouded and distorted as it is in the fantastic garb of a series of projections, each of which is a less perfect expression of the Divine Essence than its predecessor. Thus there is a gradual descent in the scale of being.

A similar conception we find in Basilides, with this difference, that he represents the divine "powers," as he calls them, which constitute the super-celestial world or Pleroma, as single, not dual. The successive heavenly "powers" which he mentions are Reason (*Noûs*), Thought (*Δόγος*), Sagacity (*Φρόντις*), Wisdom (*Σοφία*), Power (*Δύναμις*), Righteousness (*Δικαιοσύνη*), Peace (*Εἰρήνη*). All these "powers" belong to the super-celestial or heavenly realm. They are, like the "aeons" of Valentinus, simply hypostatized distinctions. The Gnostics, though their doctrine of the inexpressible God arose in a revolt from anthropomorphism, show that they were still under its influence by the manner in which they half-personify abstractions, which take the place of the gods of mythology. There was thus in their doctrine a distinctively Pagan element, which their opponents were not slow to point out.

But how does the visible universe originate? for so far we are still in the region of purely spiritual essences. The explanation of Valentinus is as follows: The lowest of the "aeons" is Wisdom (*Σοφία*), who was subject to ambition and desire, and who, in ignorance that the Uncreated One alone can produce what is perfect, gave birth to a shapeless mass (*εκτρωμα*), from which arose the visible world by means of the Demiurge who fashioned it. What this means obviously is, that the world is not the product of the supreme God, but of a limited and imperfect being. The motive of this doctrine of course was the desire to

preserve the absolute perfection of God, and yet to explain how there should have proceeded from Him a world which is full of imperfection and evil. The device by which these incompatible ideas are sought to be reconciled is by attributing the formation of the world to a subordinate and limited being. The imperfection and evil found in the world are traced back to a division in the divine nature, but the logical consequence of this doctrine—the attribution of limitation and evil to God—is sought to be avoided by the conception of a Demiurge or subordinate being, who is unable to produce a perfect world because of his necessary limitations. But though Valentinus regards all forms of subordinate existence as futile and imperfect, he avoids the absolute dualism of two opposite powers, which was characteristic of the later Persian religion, by his principle that there is in the finite an element of the divine, derived from its primal source, and hence the idea of redemption from evil constitutes the central idea of his theology.

The account of creation given by Basilides is less disfigured by half-mythological fictions. Though he maintains that we cannot in any way comprehend the inner nature of God, he yet asserts that the world, or rather the cosmical seed out of which the world was to arise, was created "out of what was not." How this took place is thus explained in the account of Basilides given by Hippolytus. "Whatever is known to us, as well as what is yet unknown, has originated from the primal cosmical seed. At the appointed time this seed expands under the influence of a God who is too great and mysterious to be conceived or expressed . . . God but spoke the word, and the 'seed' came into being. This is what Moses declares; for, as he tells us, 'God said, let there be

## 282 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

light, and there was light.' Here we learn that light was made out of nothing; for scripture does not say that light was formed out of anything, but simply that it arose at the voice of Him who spoke. . . . Thus the cosmical seed was created out of what was not,—that seed being the word (*λόγος*) which was spoken, 'Let there be light.' This is the meaning of the saying found in the Gospels: 'He was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' . . . Thus the cosmical seed is the primitive substrate of all things. As Basilides himself says, 'Whatever comes into being subsequently is always contained in the seed, as that which as yet is not, but is pre-ordained to come into being by means of the God who is not.'"<sup>1</sup>

Here we have the first clear expression of the doctrine of creation out of nothing,—a doctrine which was afterwards adopted by the Church and has survived to our own day. The value of such a conception we must not underestimate. It is the first step in the liberation of Christian theology from the false conception of God as the Architect of the universe, acting upon a pre-existent "matter." Philo was unable to free himself from the pre-conception of the eternity of "matter," though he denied the eternity of the cosmos or ordered world. Basilides saw that the admission of an independent "matter" is incompatible with the absoluteness of God, and therefore he maintained the absolute origination of the world, or rather of the cosmical seed. On the other hand, he expresses the true idea of the absolute origination of the world in a pictorial way, as if God were first complete in Himself, and then brought the cosmical seed into existence. This obviously leads

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, VII. 22.

back to the complete separation of God and the world, and therefore makes the existence of the world inexplicable. There is nothing in the nature of God, as conceived by Basilides, to account for the creation of anything, and therefore the origination of the world is a purely arbitrary and inexplicable act. If God is by His very nature self-revealing, we cannot regard the act of creation as a superfluity, but as an expression of the very nature of a Creative Intelligence.

The product of creation, according to Basilides, is not the world as an ordered whole, but the "seed of the world." Thus we have the combination of the two ideas of creation and evolution. The "cosmical seed" is created, but, once created, it passes through successive stages of development, in which there is a double process of ascent and descent. This conception of a "cosmical seed" is borrowed from the widespread belief in a primitive chaos, which we find among various nations, and which also appears in a philosophical form among the Greek thinkers. It is only in our own day that, through the progress of science, the attempt has been made to reconcile the conception of creation with that of development; and, though we must not attribute too much insight to this early Christian philosopher, we cannot, as I think, deny that in this respect he displayed a degree of speculative insight superior to most of his successors. At the same time it must be admitted that Basilides makes no attempt to reconcile the opposite ideas of creation and evolution; nor does he escape from the dualism characteristic of Gnosticism. For the "cosmical seed" contains within it an element of "matter," after all, which is incompatible with the perfection of God. Thus the congenital flaw in the doctrine of Basilides remained, try as he might to

## 284 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

conceal it. The cosmical seed in its first form is at the furthest extreme from God, and to the last it contains an irreducible element of irrationality and evil. The whole subsequent theory of Basilides is an attempt to explain how from this chaotic admixture of good and evil the higher spiritual element is separated ; but it was impossible for him to get rid of his initial assumption that the evil involved in the "cosmical seed" was inconsistent with the absolute goodness of God.

"Let us, then," proceeds Hippolytus in his account of Basilides, "see the order in which things were developed from the cosmical seed. In the seed there was contained a threefold Sonship (*υιότης*), which was absolutely identical in substance with the God that was not, and was created out of nothing. The first Sonship was refined, the second gross, the third was in need of purification. Now, the refined Sonship, the moment the seed was created, throbbing with life rushed aloft, 'like a wing or thought,' to the Creator ; for every created being strives after Him, attracted by His exceeding beauty and loveliness. The second Sonship, being of grosser nature, remained in the seed, unable to ascend of itself ; but, being invested with the Holy Spirit, was borne aloft, carrying the Spirit with it. Thus the Spirit approached the first Sonship and the God who created the seed ; but, not being of the same substance as God and the first Sonship . . . it was unable to enter the region of the Creator. The second Sonship therefore left the Spirit below the hig'lest region, a region beyond thought or expression. But the Spirit was not entirely forsaken of the Sonship . . . for, though separated, it still had in it the fragrance of the Sonship. So we read : 'As the ointment upon the head

which descended to the beard of Aaron.' . . . Now, after the ascent of the first and second Sonship, a firmament was placed between the super-cosmical and the cosmical regions. Then there burst forth from the cosmical seed the Great Archon, the Ruler of the cosmos, who is unspeakably great in power and wisdom and goodness. When he was generated out of the cosmical seed, this Archon ascended to the firmament, which he imagined to be the extreme boundary of the universe. . . . Believing himself to be Lord and Ruler and Creator, he proceeded to fashion the cosmos. First of all he formed out of what was beneath him a Son, who was better and wiser than himself, as had been pre-ordained by the God that was not when He created the cosmical seed. Amazed at the beauty of his Son, the Great Archon placed him at his own right hand, in what is called the Ogdoad, *i.e.* in the aethereal region fashioned by the Demiurge, where his Son operates in him and counsels him, being much wiser than himself. . . . All aethereal things, then,—*i.e.* the whole region extending downward to the sphere of the moon—are governed by the Son of the Great Archon; and below the aether is the region of air. When the whole aethereal region had been formed, there ascended from the cosmical seed another Archon, who was superior to all that remained in it except what was left of the Sonship, but much inferior to the first Archon. This second Archon is also said to be inexpressible. He dwells in the region of the Hebdomad, and is ruler over the whole of the region lying beneath him. He also made a Son out of the cosmical seed, who was more intelligent and wiser than himself."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytes, VII. 22-24.

## 286 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

It is difficult for us to take much interest in this complicated and artificial system; but the general idea of Basilides is intelligible enough. He presupposes the division of the universe into a super-celestial region or heaven, a celestial region and a terrestrial region. The threefold Sonship, again, corresponds to these three regions, and, though each is conceived as differing in degree, there is an identity in substance or essential nature with the supreme God. We may express the idea of Basilides by saying that in the creation there are two elements—the material and the spiritual—and that the spiritual by the process of evolution separates from the material and comes into unity with its primal source. Expressed in terms of later theology, the doctrine is that the Son is of the same substance or essential nature as the Father, but is not eternally begotten. Further, the Holy Spirit is not of the same substance as the Father and the Son, but is at once created and lower in nature. This doctrine of three degrees of spiritual reality was necessitated by the primary conception of the absolute separateness and self-completeness of the supreme God. The fundamental dualism of God and the world pervades the whole theology of Basilides. The cosmical seed is not an expression of the absolute nature of God, but contains an unspiritual or evil element, so that the process of regeneration consists in a complete separation of the spiritual from the material. This is a distinctive note of all Gnostic systems, which invariably assume that matter is in some way the antithesis of spirit. On the other hand, the universe is not conceived as absolutely evil. Neither Basilides nor any of the other Gnostics adopt the Persian or Manichaean absolute opposition of a good and an evil principle.

From this extreme view they save themselves by maintaining that the world by its very nature contains within it the promise and potency of good, or is under the influence of the providence (*wpóvōia*) of the supreme God. This is expressed in a pictorial way by the ascent of the Sonship to God, which, however, is conceived as purely spiritual or super-human. This was an important reservation, because it makes the idea of an incarnation or manifestation of God in man inexplicable.

The doctrine of the two Archons with their sons is characteristic of Gnosticism. The First Archon is the maker of the heavens, the second Archon of the earth; but the real Governor of the former is the Son of the First Archon, the real Governor of the earth the Son of the second Archon. This is Basilides' way of saying that the created universe is under the providence of God. The important point here is that Basilides distinguishes between the Supreme God and the subordinate agents, who carry out His will. The motives for this dualistic doctrine were mainly these two: (1) the endeavour to preserve the absolute perfection of God by attributing creation and providence to a subordinate agent; (2) the attempt to account for the inadequate conception of God contained in the Old Testament. To this latter point we must now direct our attention.

"After the completion of the cosmical and super-cosmical regions," proceeds Hippolytus in his account of the doctrine of Basilides, "there still remained in the cosmical seed the third Sonship, which was to emerge from the seed and ascend above the firmament; as it is written, 'The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.' Now, by 'sons of God,' says Basilides, is meant

## 288 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

'spiritual' men (*οἱ πνευματικοί*), whose office it is to perfect the souls which are placed in this lower world. Hence we read that 'sin reigned from Adam to Moses.' This means that the Great Archon who rules from the firmament imagined himself to be the only God. Here, according to Basilides, is the 'mystery' which was unknown to the early ages, the Great Archon being supposed to be the Lord of all things. In truth the Second Archon was the real Governor of the lower world, and he it was who said to Moses: 'I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and I have not revealed to them the name of God (as they would have us read),' i.e. the name of the Great Archon. All the prophets prior to the Saviour, they say, were inspired by the Archon of the lower world. But when the time had come for the revelation that we are the sons of God —an event for which the whole creation groaned and travailed—the Gospel came into the world, and passed through every principality and power and dominion and every name that is named."<sup>1</sup>

We have here Basilides' view of the relation of Judaism to Christianity. Like other Gnostics he was strongly impressed by the new revelation of the nature of God which had been made by Christianity, and the problem forced itself upon him to reconcile this idea with the statements in the Old Testament which seemed to him incompatible with it. St. Paul had already solved the difficulty by the conception of successive stages in the divine education of the race, the first extending from Adam to Moses, the second from Moses to Christ, and the last from Christ to the end of the world. The Gnostics did not accept this highly suggestive philosophy of history in the direct Pauline form, though they claimed and indeed believed

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, VII. 25.

that they were following the hidden meaning of the Apostle. Their exegesis involved a continual transformation of the plain meaning of scripture, including the Apostolic writings, and hence the Pauline scheme was interpreted after their manner as at once a cosmogony and a philosophy of history. St. Paul's conception was based upon the absolute unchangeability of God; the Gnostics, with their theory of emanations, were led to hold that inferior, though superhuman, powers were the direct agencies, while yet they maintained that these were the unconscious medium of the providence of God Himself. It therefore seemed to them that the God of the Old Testament was not the Supreme God, but one of the inferior powers. To Basilides the Pauline saying that "sin reigned from Adam to Moses" seemed to refer to the sin of the Great Archon in claiming to be the Supreme God; and the period from Moses to Christ was held to be the time when the Second Archon, the God of the Jews, was the real Governor of the world. To the objection that the Old Testament, on his own showing, expressed this truth, and therefore could not proceed from a being lower than God, Basilides answered that the prophets were inspired by the Second Archon, who was himself the unconscious medium of the Supreme God. Basilides seems also to have found in heathen nations testimony to the same effect. Thus in his own way he endorses the Pauline view of three great stages in the revelation of the nature of God, maintaining that the first two stages were vague anticipations of what was openly proclaimed by the Gospel. What, then, was the precise nature of this new revelation?

"The Gospel was first revealed," we are told, "by the Son of the Great Archon to his Father, who learned that he was not the God of the universe, but was begotten. . . . The Great Archon was converted and

filled with fear, when he saw in what ignorance he had lain. This is what is meant by the saying: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' For the Great Archon began to be wise, being taught by his Son the Christ, who revealed to him the God that was not, explaining the nature of the Sonship and of the Holy Spirit, as well as the destiny of the universe and the manner in which the final restitution shall take place. . . . When the mystery had been revealed to the Great Archon and all his subjects, the Gospel must next be proclaimed in the Hebdomad. This was done by the Son of the Great Archon illuminating the Son of the Second Archon, by whom it was revealed to his Father; whereupon the Second Archon was also thrown into fear and confessed his sin. And when all the Hebdomad had been illuminated, last of all our world must also be illuminated, and the mystery revealed to the Sonship still remaining in the formless world. . . . The light therefore descended upon Jesus, the son of Mary, as it is written, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and the power of the Highest will overshadow thee.'<sup>1</sup> The final consummation consists in the whole Sonship being transformed, following Jesus, and sinking purified into the bosom of the non-existent God. Till then the universe endures, and

"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of eternity."

In this daring doctrine salvation involves the deliverance, not only of man, but first and primarily of the inhabitants of the higher spheres of being. This is in accordance with the general Gnostic doctrine, which traces back the imperfection and evil existing in the lower world to the Spiritual Powers dwelling in

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, VII. 26.

the Ogdoad and Hebdomad. And salvation, in the one case as in the other, is conceived to consist in a special illumination or Gnosis. As in our world the Sonship is imbedded in "matter," it is further held that only "spiritual" men are capable of salvation, or at least of the highest illumination.

It is obvious that such a doctrine cannot admit the identity of the man Jesus with the heavenly Christ, which descended upon him. Basilides, in fact, maintained that there was no real union between the heavenly Christ and the son of Mary, who was simply the first of the "spiritual" men, to whom was revealed the great "mystery" of the inexpressible God. This, however, was not the uniform doctrine of the Gnostics. The Valentinians thought that the body of Jesus was not human, but celestial, and therefore that he was only apparently the son of Mary; while others, of whom Saturnilus is the representative, declared that the whole appearance of Christ was a phantom, and therefore denied the birth of Jesus altogether. It was quite in accordance with this dualistic doctrine that the Gnostics made a sharp distinction between "spiritual" and "natural" men, holding that only the former were capable of Gnosis and the divine life, while the latter were by their very constitution doomed to destruction. The Valentinians so far modified this doctrine as to hold that there are three classes of men—the "natural," the "psychical" and the "spiritual"—and admitted that, though the Gnosis is possible only for the last, the second class are capable of a certain apprehension of the supersensible by means of "faith." Combined with this doctrine was the belief, common to all Gnostics, that "spiritual" men are already in possession of the highest truth, and merely wait for the time when they shall enter into the heavenly Pleroma.

## **292 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

We know what was said of this doctrine by the Apostle Paul, when he found incipient traces of it among the Colossians. For him the separation between God and the Creator, and between Jesus and the Father, as well as the intellectual particularism which divided men into separate classes, was an entire subversion of the Gospel. We have therefore no difficulty in seeing that the Church, in resolutely rejecting the whole Gnostic conception of the person of Jesus, and the distinction of men into classes, was the true successor of the Apostle. The aberrations of the Gnostics enable us to sympathize with the acute controversy of the fourth century over the doctrine of the Trinity, and to see that the Church was right in principle in maintaining the true humanity and true divinity of Christ as inseparable from the universality of the Christian faith, whatever may be said of the form in which this fundamental truth was stated. Our investigation into Hellenic Gnosticism makes it evident that no true and consistent Theology can be based upon the self-contradictory conception of the absolute transcendence and unknowability of the divine nature. As we have seen, it was this initial falsehood which led to all the rest. Because of it, the daring hypothesis of intermediate beings was advanced ; because of it, the Creator of the world was distinguished from the one God who is over all and through all and in all ; because of it, the union of the divine and human was denied, and Christian faith converted into an esoteric doctrine revealed only to certain select souls. A true system of Theology must be prepared to defend and make intelligible the propositions which the Gnostics denied, but it must seek to do so in terms of the enlarged experience and knowledge of our own day.

Before passing to the third phase of Gnosticism

something must be said of the ethics of Hellenic Gnosticism. Like all systems which set up an absolute opposition between the natural and the spiritual, the Gnostic ethics assumed either an ascetic or an antinomian form. When the natural was viewed as evil, the ascetic tendency prevailed, and the authority of Christ and the Apostles, who were misrepresented as ascetics, was invoked; when the absolute spirituality of the elect was insisted upon, the natural was regarded as indifferent, and its adherents became worldly or licentious. The Gnostics as a rule followed the nobler tendency, but there can be no doubt that antinomianism in the worst sense was the practical result of the dualism of sense and spirit. The confusion between asceticism and the spiritualization of the natural has been made in all ages. The double aspect of Christianity, which combines dying with living, is apt to be misinterpreted, and the false doctrine maintained that there is a special virtue in self-mortification for its own sake. Thus the energies of Christian men are apt to be diverted from the great positive duties of life to an unhealthy brooding over the inevitable weakness and sin of humanity. When we see that this distorted ethics is bound up with a dualistic theology, which forgets that all men are "made in the image of God," we shall perhaps be less ready to confuse the active transformation of the natural into the spiritual with the mere negation of the natural. At the very time when the Church was branding Gnostic theology as heretical, it was succumbing to Gnostic asceticism, and we have for centuries the strange spectacle of the Church partially conquered by its early enemy.

## III. SYRIAC GNOSTICISM.

We have seen the form which Gnosticism assumed under Judaic and Hellenic influences, and it only remains to consider it in its Syriac form, as it grew up in the valley of the Euphrates. Here Christianity appears to have been introduced only about the middle of the second century, and to have been unaffected by Greek philosophy. This immunity it owed to its political isolation and its language. Until A.D. 216, in the Reign of Caracalla, it was beyond the boundary of the Roman Empire, and the Aramaic of Edessa, its metropolis, differed from the Aramaic of Palmyra and Palestine in much the same way as Lowland "Scots" differs from the standard English. It was therefore natural that a vernacular translation should be made of the Old Testament and of that part of the New Testament—the Gospels, the Epistles of St. Paul and the Acts—which was regarded as canonical. How little this isolated Christian community was affected by the burning controversies of Greek and Latin Christianity is shown by the fact that in the Homilies of Aphratus, written within half a century after the Council of Nicaea, there is no reference to the Arian controversy. This eastern branch of the Church seems to have taken little interest in theological speculation, and to have given its mind almost entirely to the consideration of practical religion.

In such a community Gnosticism naturally assumed a different form from that which was developed under the predominant influence of Hellenic philosophy. The *Acts of Thomas*, a Gnostic work belonging to the middle of the third century, turns against unprofitable speculations about the constitution of the spiritual world. "As long as we are in this world," St. Thomas

is represented as saying, "we are unable to speak about that which all the believers in God are going to receive." In this Gnostic document no attempt is made to account for the origin of the world, there are no aeons and emanations, nor does the writer seem disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling Judaism and Christianity. Syriac Gnosticism, in fact, bears a much closer resemblance to the Gnosticism which appeared in the Colossian church than to the speculative Gnosticism of Alexandria. At the same time it is not wanting in certain features which show that, if it did not indulge in large speculations about the nature of God, man and the world, this was due mainly to its lack of reflection, and not to any superiority in the fundamental ideas by which its view of life was dominated.

The *Acts of Thomas* is as unspeculative in form as in content. It purports to narrate the adventures of Judas Thomas, the twin-brother of our Lord—a daring fiction which only a Gnostic could have believed—in his efforts to preach the Gospel in India. It is quite misleading to compare a work of this kind to the modern "religious novel," as a recent author does; for we cannot doubt that, fabulous as the story is, it embodied the legend which had gradually grown up around the shrine of St. Thomas, whose bones were reputed to be preserved at Edessa. The book indicates a belief in angels, in devils which assume the form of a black snake, in "an ass's colt of the stock that served the prophet Balaam," in demoniac possession, and in the magical virtue of the dust of the Saint. But, besides these oriental characteristics, its main motive is to insist upon asceticism, as the true Christian ideal,—a doctrine which is explicitly connected with the assumption of the evil nature of

## 296 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

matter. The story tells how the King of a certain place gave a great feast to celebrate his only daughter's marriage. "When the bride and bridegroom are alone our Lord himself appears to them in the likeness of Thomas and persuades them both to a life of virginity." On another occasion "a young man's hand withers, and he confesses that he had killed a woman who would not live a life of virginity with him. On his repentance he brings Thomas to the dead woman's body, and by means of the Apostle she is brought to life again, and describes the torments of the unchaste that she had seen in hell." Again, "while the Apostle is preaching in India, the General of King Magdai comes beseeching him to free his wife and daughter from evil and lascivious devils. Thomas leaves his converts under the care of the deacon Xanthippus and goes with the General. On the way the horses of their chariot break down, but four wild asses come to be harnessed in their stead, and with their help the devils are driven out and the women healed." There are other stories of the same kind, all teaching the same Gnostic doctrine. There is a similar glorification of poverty. Thomas agreed to build a palace for King Gundaphar in India; but, instead of doing so, he spent the money given him for that purpose among the poor. Thomas was cast into prison, but the King, on hearing the dream of his brother Gad, in which he saw a magnificent palace in heaven, which was the very palace built by the Apostle, repented and was baptised. Further, if the *Acts of Thomas* is free from the "uncouth jargon of Aeons and Emanations," as Mr. Burkitt contends, it is by no means free from that symbolic mysticism which is characteristic of Gnosticism, and from a belief in the unknowability of the spiritual world.

It must not be supposed that Syrian Gnosticism has produced nothing better than the superstitious and unspeculative *Acts of Thomas*. There is a contemporary work, now believed to have been written by Philip, a disciple of Bardaisan, which, perhaps, exhibits Gnosticism at its best. The main aim of the author was to reconcile the providence of God with the free-will of man, but its Gnostic character is revealed by its curious explanation of the origin of the cosmos, and its exclusion of those who "were not created for good and are called tares" from all hope of salvation. The universe, according to this author, is composed of elemental beings, which constitute the primitive "matter" of all things. Unlike Basilides, Philip therefore denied the absolute creation of matter out of nothing. His view is that the work of creation consisted in bringing the primitive elements into an orderly shape, so that each, keeping its own sphere, might work in harmony with all the rest. He contends that even the elements have a certain degree of freedom, and must appear at the Last Day to answer for their acts. Only man, however, has freedom in the full sense of the term. This gift of freedom is advanced as the reason why God did not make man incapable of sin, and it is contended that it is in respect of the gift of free-will that man was made in the image of God. There are three influences at work upon man—*nature*, *fate* and *free-will*. By nature all men share in the common lot of birth, life and death; by fate they experience distinctions of wealth and power, health and sickness; by free-will they are able to modify their fate, and the use they make of their freedom determines their immortal destiny. "Even if a man be poor and sick he can love and bless and speak the truth, and can pray for the good of every

## **298 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

man he knows ; while if he be rich and strong he can in addition help his neighbour. Nothing can hinder us from these things ; we are not commanded to do anything involving bodily strength or mental cleverness. . . . The commandments of God are easy ; it is success in this life that is barred with obstacles." It is a relief to escape from the puerilities and sickly asceticism of the *Acts of Thomas* to a work which, if it is disfigured to some extent by a dualistic opposition of God and the world, the spiritual and the natural, is on the whole permeated by a healthy vein of Christian speculation.



## LECTURE TWELFTH

### AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH

IN Gnosticism we have found a philosophy of religion in which the distinctive principle of Christianity does not find anything like a clear and adequate expression. We have now to enquire how far this defect is remedied in the doctrine of Augustine, the first great speculative genius of the Christian Church. Like all the great thinkers who have left their impress on their own and succeeding ages, Augustine came under the influence of the main natural and spiritual forces which were operative in his day, and it is this fulness of life which gives to his development its instructiveness and its importance. Though nothing was further from his own thoughts, it is none the less true that he gave to the Christian religious consciousness, and to Christian doctrine, a new form and content. This result was partly due to the struggle through which he passed, and to the wide and varied culture which he assimilated. The son of a heathen father and a Christian mother, there was from his very earliest days a contradiction in his mind which must needs, in a man of such veracity and sincerity, lead in the course of his development to disturbance and unrest.

From his father Augustine received his impassioned

## 300 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

temperament, from his mother that profound reverence which is the source of all true religion. Thus there was in his nature from the first a conflict of opposite tendencies, which forced him to penetrate into the hidden springs of being. This complexity was part of the secret of his power; for it is not simple homogeneous natures, which never experience the conflicts of doubt, that are destined to be the great benefactors of the race, but those impassioned and struggling natures which are saved "so as by fire." Had Augustine not passed through a region of doubt and conflict, he would never have been the reformer of Christian piety, and the great speculative thinker that he proved himself to be.

His first awakening from the life of unregulated passion Augustine himself ascribes to the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*. Though he had never ceased to attend the ordinary religious services of the church, the Christian faith was for him, as he himself says, *supersticio quaedam puerilis*; in other words, he simply accepted the traditional faith passively, without any real vital belief in it, and he was first inspired with the vision of something higher than the life of sense and the empty elegances of the rhetoric of his day by Cicero's defence of philosophy, though he was repelled by the absence from it of all distinctively Christian teaching. His next stage was therefore to turn to the study of scripture, in order to see if he could there find the truth which Cicero had extolled without revealing. The immediate effect was repulsion. The pupil of Cicero did not find in the sacred writings the dignity and eloquence of his model. The reason he gives for his dissatisfaction is significant: the profound truth contained in the sacred writings was, he says, veiled in "mysteries," and to these he had not as yet the



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 301

key. This key was the allegorical method which he afterwards learned from Ambrose.

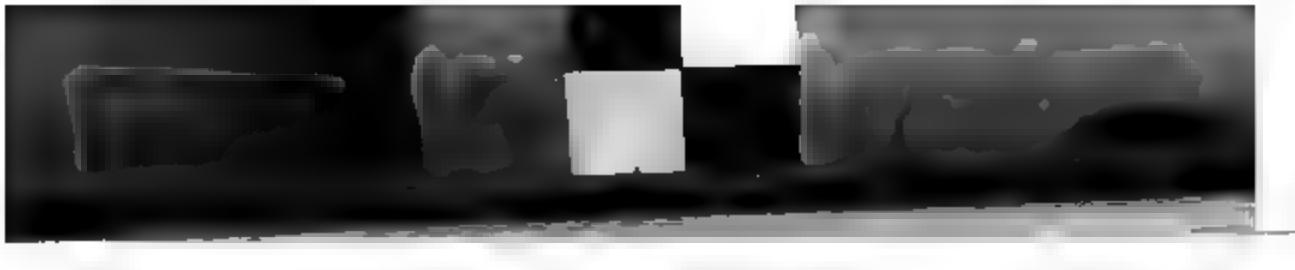
Unsatisfied in his quest, Augustine turned to Manichaeism, and for nine years he was a believer in its truth. No phase of his development is more important than this, and we must therefore try to make clear to ourselves the secret of its power. How did Augustine, with his Christian training and his newly-awakened thirst for truth, come to accept the Manichaean philosophy?

In the end of the third century, three great religious creeds were struggling for the mastery: Manichaeism, Neoplatonism, and Catholic Christianity. Each of these had a history, which in its origin went back more than a thousand years, and started from an entirely different point. Manichaeism was a development from the ancient Babylonian religion, a religion which was based upon the worship of the great powers of nature; Neoplatonism was evolved out of Greek polytheism, which had converted the earlier worship of the powers of nature into personal gods by the transforming influence of the artistic genius of the Greeks; Catholic Christianity was developed out of Jewish Monotheism into the new conception of a self-manifesting God, who had revealed Himself in His Son as in His essence the God of Love. At the end of the third century, each of these systems had been so transformed, that the national and particularist character which it originally possessed had disappeared. They were universal forms of faith, claiming the allegiance of all men, putting forth a precise doctrine of God, the world and history, laying down a specific system of morality, and prescribing a definite ritual. They had thus ceased to be the simple expression of native religious feeling, and had become reflective

## 302 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

and self-conscious. Nor had these systems reached their mature form without being more or less influenced by one another, as well as by other foreign ingredients. Manichaeism, though its basis was Babylonian, had appropriated Persian and Christian, if not Buddhistic, elements. Neoplatonism developed from Greek polytheism, but it also came under oriental influences, and received its peculiar form from philosophical speculation. Catholic Christianity was not the passive acceptance of the simple faith of the primitive Christian, but an organized system, which had been developed by Hellenic speculation, and had assimilated various elements from its antagonists. There are certain ideas common to all three : the ideas of revelation, salvation, and immortality. It was inevitable that Neoplatonism should first succumb to its rivals. In Plotinus it was rather an abstract philosophical creed than a religion, and though later Neoplatonists made an attempt to incorporate polytheism, the attempt was foredoomed to failure, since polytheism had become incredible. By the middle of the fourth century Neoplatonism had been practically overcome by Christianity, though it still survived as the creed of individual thinkers for two centuries more. Manichaeism, which had a much firmer hold of the popular mind, maintained its footing, in the east and the west, far into the Middle Ages.

In Augustine's day, the struggle of Manichaeism with Christianity was still going on. In virtue of its greater spiritual depth and significance, Christianity was bound to triumph in the long run, but meantime its opponent had many followers. The inner development of Augustine shows us in a very clear way what was the source of its strength. Its half-mythological representation of God appealed to the multitude, who in all ages are prone to figure the divine in a sensuous



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 303

way ; it also seemed to afford a solution of the origin of evil ; by its ascetic morality and its simple organization it appealed to the higher intuitions of men ; while it also held out to them hopes of a blessed immortality.

Of the main doctrines of Mani himself, we are now able to form a tolerably clear idea, though many of the details of the system are obscure. The doctrine of Mani, like the early speculations of the Christian Gnostics, rests upon a confusion between the natural and the spiritual. It is fundamentally dualistic in its character—for though Mani did not derive existence from two separate powers, but traced all back to a single primal unity, that unity was for him rather a pious imagination than a reasoned belief. When he comes to tell us what is the nature of the universe, he is essentially dualistic. As in the Persian religion, there are two great antagonistic powers, light and darkness, good and evil. We are apt to think of light as merely a symbol of goodness, darkness as a symbol of evil ; but so to 'read the doctrine is to import into it a distinction which for Mani did not exist. It is difficult for us to realize that there was a time when there was no clear demarcation between the natural and the spiritual ; but there can be no doubt that, to Mani's mind, light and goodness, darkness and evil, formed one inseparable idea. It is, therefore, hardly correct to say with Harnack that "the system of Mani is thoroughly materialistic." Materialism is an explicit reduction of the spiritual to the material, and no such reduction can be made by one who has never distinguished the one from the other. To know the nature of the world was therefore for Mani to know the ultimate nature of existence. Liberation from evil is for him the natural process by which the

## 304 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

particles of light are freed from their intermixture with the particles of darkness. On such a theory morality consists in the elimination of the elements which proceed from the realm of darkness.

When Mani cast his eyes over the world, he seemed to see that two absolutely opposite forces were at work in it—on the one side the gentle zephyr, the cooling wind, the bright light, the vitalizing fire, the transparent water; on the other side, mist, glowing heat, tempest, gloom, cloud. Taking his cue from the Babylonian religion and from Parseeism, he sought to explain the conflict of opposite forces by the conception of two antagonistic principles, entirely separated from each other—the principle of light and the principle of darkness. These were conceived, after the manner of the Babylonian religion, as occupying two separate realms or kingdoms. In the kingdom of light were the upper heavens and earth, presided over by glorious Aeons, and having God at its head, the Primal Good, whose attributes were love, faith, fidelity, nobility, wisdom, gentleness, knowledge, understanding, memory and insight. The kingdom of darkness had also at its head female personifications, but it was not presided over by God. From all eternity these two kingdoms had been opposed to each other. They were spacially separated, the kingdom of light above, the kingdom of darkness below; the lower side of the kingdom of light coming in contact with the upper side of the kingdom of darkness. The one kingdom never encroaches on the other, but each remains entirely distinct. There is no special difficulty in seeing that Mani, after the fashion of the religions of nature, imaged spiritual powers as vast physically extended realities, thus converting abstract properties into spacial



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 305

magnitudes. In this way he created a fantastic cosmology, which he employed to explain the conflict of spiritual forces. From the kingdom of darkness arose Satan and his demons—a conception which Mani, like the later Jewish religion, no doubt borrowed from Persia, and which was also imported into Catholic Christianity. Urged by his inner nature, Satan made an assault on the kingdom of light, making the point of his attack the light-earth. To meet this attack the light-God created the "primal man," endowing him with the five pure elements. Satan was victorious. Then the light-God himself came forth, and, by the help of new Aeons, conquered Satan and freed the "primal man." The "primal man," however, was forced to descend into the abyss, because in the conflict with Satan elements of darkness were intermingled with the elements of light. At the command of the light-God the visible heavens and earth were made, and were upheld by the Aeons, the angels of light. The primal man dwells in the sun, along with the holy spirits who carry on the work of redemption; in the moon is enthroned the mother of life, and in the twelve stars are the primal elements of animal life. Our world is not entirely devoid of light-particles, which are diffused everywhere and which, entering into living beings, there wait for liberation. While the world is regarded as the creation of good spirits, man was the product of Satan, in union with sin, avarice and lust. But Satan, in forming man, put into him the particles of light, of which he had robbed the kingdom of light in order to rule with greater security. Adam had therefore a double nature, being formed after the image of Satan, while yet containing elements of light. Eve had a small element of light in her

## 306 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

nature, but she was regarded as mainly endowed with a seductive sensibility which led to the fall of Adam. To free man from the rule of Satan prophets were sent into the world, among them Noah, Abraham, and perhaps Zoroaster and Buddha. Jesus, Mani seems also to have placed among the prophets; not, however, the historical Jesus, the Messiah of the Jews, but a spiritual Jesus sent down from the world of light, who neither suffered nor died (*Jesus impatibilis*). The greatest and last of the prophets was Mani himself, who took up the work of Jesus and Paul; for Paul also was recognized as a prophet. Mani claimed to be a messenger of light, the "Paraclete," promised by Jesus. Through him and his followers the separation of light from darkness is to be accomplished. He who is not saved in this world, must undergo a process of purification in the next. Mani, however, did not, as is sometimes supposed, hold the doctrine of metempsychosis.

It is obvious that the fundamental principle of this fantastic cosmogony is the absolute opposition of light and darkness, good and evil; and hence the ethical doctrine of Mani could only be ascetic. On the other hand, since liberation from the elements of darkness and a purification of the particles of light are maintained, the ethics of Mani is not entirely negative. In practice, however, Manichaeism was of a strongly ascetic character. The elect must abstain from animal food and wine, and though they are permitted a vegetable diet, they are forbidden to pluck the fruit of trees. They must also abstain from marriage, and submit to a very rigorous system of fasts, occupying almost one-fourth of the year. They had to offer up prayer four times a day, turning towards the sun and moon as the sources of light.



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 307

These stringent regulations could only be imposed on the elect, while the *auditores* or catechumens were merely forbidden to worship idols, to practice magic, and, above all, to kill living beings. Thus arose a double morality, similar to the distinction in the Catholic church between the clergy and the laity. Great respect was naturally paid to the elect, who were regarded as saviours, and who, by their ascetic life, shortened the punishment which the *auditores* had to undergo after death. A characteristic feature was the view that only the elect were in full possession of religious truth. The Manichaeian church formed a hierarchy. At the head were the teachers, or sons of gentleness; then came the rulers or bishops, the sons of knowledge; next the elders or presbyters, the sons of understanding; then the *electi*, the sons of memory; lastly the *auditores*, the sons of insight. One of the teachers seems to have been the head or Pope of the whole Manichaeian church, which had therefore a monarchical constitution.

The attraction of Manichaeism for Augustine at this stage of his development lay partly in the difficulty he found in accepting the Catholic doctrines, and partly in the solution Manichaeism seemed to give of fundamental problems. At this time Augustine thought that the Manichaeans were right in their negative criticism of the Old Testament. To represent God in an anthropomorphic way, as he held, was incompatible with the divine nature, while the accounts of the patriarchs dishonoured God by representing as favourites of the true God, men whose lives and actions were contrary to a high code of morality. Augustine also seemed to find in the doctrines of the Manichaeans a solution of the problem of evil and of human freedom. He was unable to see how evil could be ascribed to the freedom of

## 308 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

man; rather it seemed to him to be the inevitable result of his nature. On the other hand, it was, as he thought, impossible to attribute evil to God, and therefore the Manichaeian doctrine of an evil principle, entirely foreign to God, seemed to afford a way of escape from the blasphemous idea that God was the author of evil. Another thing which attracted him in Manichaeism was the high place it gave to the love of truth, asserting that man must in no case accept anything not demonstrable by reason. Augustine was also drawn to Manichaeism by the reputation for holiness of Mani and his followers, and by their ascetic practices, which he valued all the more from their contrast to the life of sense he had formerly led. In embracing Manichaeism, Augustine did not feel that he was abandoning Christianity, for the Manichaeans of his day gave a high place in their system, at least in words, to the founder of Christianity.

Augustine's remarks on Aristotle's "Categories," which he read in his Manichaeian period, show that he was not able, in his preoccupation with the new problems of his age, to appreciate the aim of Aristotle in this analysis of the main elements by which being is characterized. The use Augustine made of it was to apply to his Manichaeian conception of God, as an infinitely extended substance, the categories which for Aristotle were simply the most general modes of determining things. In this external application to a foreign matter of predicates accepted on authority, we have the beginning of a false method, which afterwards played so large a part in Scholasticism.

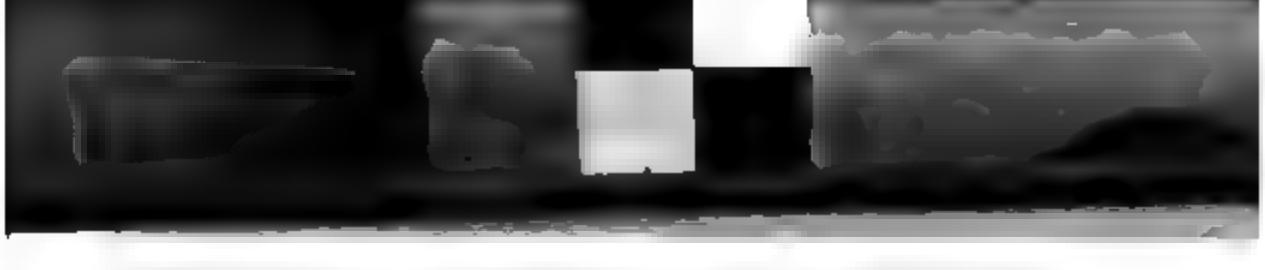
In his twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh year, Augustine wrote a work on the *Beautiful* and *Fit*. The aesthetic theory which he here laid down we only know in general, for at the time when he wrote the *Con-*

fessions it had disappeared, and its author no longer took any interest in it. Starting from the ancient principle that the "Beautiful" consists in symmetry and harmony of parts, he distinguishes from it the "Fit," which consists in a harmonious relation between one thing and another. Thus, any organ of the living being is "beautiful" in so far as it forms part of a symmetrical whole, while the shoe is "fit" as adapted to the foot. Augustine, however, if we are to judge from what he says in a later work (*De Civitate Dei*, xi. 18-23, xxii. 19), maintained that the beautiful is more than the symmetrical, implying as it does the contrast of opposites. In accordance with his mode of thought at the time, he applies this theory of the beautiful to the universe as a whole. As the one universe contains the two opposite principles of good and evil, while yet it is a unity, it does not cease to be beautiful because it contains what is noxious and dangerous. Evil has its due place in the world, and so far is essential to the beauty of the whole. This doctrine, of course, harmonises with the Manichaeism, which then formed the philosophical creed of Augustine. It is worth observing that in this attempt to explain why beautiful objects attract us, Augustine is not satisfied with the easy-going solution of Cicero as to the good providence of God, but insists upon facing the problem of the existence of ugliness and evil. It would not be true to say that he owed this deeper view of things to Manichaeism, but we can hardly be wrong in saying that he found Manichaeism so attractive, just because he had reached a point, and his age had reached a point, when optimism could only be preserved after a full recognition of the strength of pessimism. Never again could the world be satisfied with any solution of the problem of existence which did not explain evil, and

## 310 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

in some way reconcile it with goodness. Such an explanation Augustine, at this time, was not prepared to give ; and, therefore, in his aesthetic theory, as in his theological creed, he was content to assume the unity of God, while yet he maintained that ugliness and evil were abstract opposites of beauty and goodness. That both sides of the antithesis existed, and were essential to the unity of the whole, he dimly saw, but so long as he absolutely opposed them, it was impossible logically to unite them in a consistent doctrine.

We have now to see how Augustine was led to discard Manichaeism. The first impulse to a more adequate theory came from his study of the science of his day, and especially from the study of astronomy. The immediate effect of this study, it is true, was to lead him into the false path of the belief in astrology ; but from this he was freed by what might be called a crucial experiment. If astrology was right, two persons born under precisely the same planetary influences ought to have precisely the same fate. Now, it so happened that a rhetorician called Firminius and a slave were born under the same conjunction of planets, their horoscopes having been carefully taken by two eminent astrologists. The one became a rich rhetorician, the other was a poor slave. This fact seemed to Augustine to demonstrate the absurdity of astrology. In rejecting the divinatory elements of astrology, Augustine, however, retained what was permanent in it, and it was partly from his intimate acquaintance with the astronomy of his day that he was able to see how flimsy were the pretensions to universal truth of the renowned Faustus, the Manichaean apostle. From that moment his ardour for Manichaeism cooled, and we are not surprised to find that soon afterwards he came to the conclusion



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 311

that the only rational attitude is absolute doubt, man being incapable of reaching ultimate truth. With a purely negative doctrine, however, Augustine could not long be satisfied: it was but a preparation for the great crisis of his life, and his conversion to Christianity.

The development of Augustine, so far, is of the most instructive character. Beginning with a simple, uncritical faith in what he had been taught, the consciousness of evil impressed upon him by the experience of his earlier years put him in the way to feel the force of Cicero's apology for philosophy, though he was unable to rest satisfied with it, because it seemed to bear no relation to his early faith. When he came to examine that faith, as held by the ordinary unreflective Christian, it repelled his intellect. It seemed to him than Manichaeism was justified in its criticism of the Old Testament, and that in attributing to two antagonistic principles the antithetical phenomena of good and evil, it at once explained the facts and preserved the majesty of God. Reverence for God was always the deepest element in Augustine's faith. When Manichaeism was found wanting, while yet Christianity was still to him the mere survival of his youthful training, there seemed to be no other conclusion than that truth, the vision of which had appeared before him when he read the praise of philosophy in Cicero, was beyond the reach of man; so that for some time he had no positive faith, and wandered about in the cheerless gloom of Academic Scepticism. It may be noted that even in this seemingly negative attitude, Augustine never lost his faith in the majesty of God. As it began to come home to him that the individual man may well be humbled, when he sees how little the clearest intellect can penetrate the veil behind

### **312 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

which God seems to hide Himself, it was natural to conclude that truth was for God alone, and that man must be contented with appearance. Nor is it uninstructive to consider that the scepticism of Augustine was really a dogmatism. I do not mean merely that it was burdened with the fundamental contradiction which besets all scepticism—the contradiction of claiming to know that one knows nothing—but that it exhibits the union in one person of a belief in the existence and majesty of God, with the inconsistent denial of the possibility of comprehending reality. But Augustine was not one to rest in a mere blind belief. Though for the moment he had come to despair of the power of man to reach truth by himself, his longing after truth, or what to him was the same thing, his longing after God, was unquenchable. Nothing short of God could satisfy this "God-intoxicated" man. This explains why, in his next phase, he was ready to fall back upon the Church as a means of certifying

scriptures, literally interpreted, seemed to countenance. For him the text of scripture had everywhere a spiritual or mystical meaning. As he was fond of quoting: "The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive"; that is, the literal meaning of scripture destroys faith, the allegorical establishes it. Thus the coarse criticism of the Manichaeans—which was in its essence identical with the later attacks of eighteenth century Deists—was outflanked. Nor was this all, for Ambrose, in every word he spoke, betrayed that sublime conception of God as a spirit which was in sharp contrast to the half-material conception of God as an infinitely diffused light, which was characteristic of Manichaeism. Here Augustine seemed to find an answer to his deepest longings after a worthy conception of God. He also learned from Ambrose that the world, and especially man, was not the blind result of two opposite forces, but the free creation of God, and that man was not bound in the iron chains of necessity, but was the free author of his acts. Thus the very impulse which had induced Augustine to accept Manichaeism—the inextinguishable conviction of the perfection and goodness of God—now led him to cast it aside. The idea of God as a spirit destroyed the gross Manichaean conception of God as a vast magnitude, and the conception of the absolute unity of God showed him that the dualism of the Manichaeans was untenable. Ambrose, by removing the main stumbling-blocks in his way, had almost persuaded him to be a Christian. There was also another element which produced a strong impression on Augustine's mind. Convinced as he was of the impotence of human reason when left to itself, he was now disposed to fall back on a higher authority. The Church, as it seemed to him, had through Ambrose revealed to him truth,

## 314 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

which no other system had attained. Why then should he not admit that the Church is the medium of higher truth? In all things we are dependent upon testimony: why not upon the testimony of the Church, which is the only guarantee to us of the nature of God? If the Church reveals to us a truth, which we cannot discover for ourselves, are we not compelled to admit that it is a divinely appointed instrument of God, by which the means of salvation is revealed to man? For Augustine these solutions were as yet merely problematic, but he was strongly disposed to accept them.

We must, however, be careful not to overstate the attitude of Augustine at this time. He was still very far from that clear and organized system of truth, which he afterwards developed. He had the greatest difficulty in conceiving of God as pure spirit, and was in continual danger of falling back upon the easier conception of God as an infinitely extended substance. Nor could he quite satisfy himself that man was truly free. If man is free, what is the origin of evil in him? Does it come from matter? Then, God is not all-powerful, since there is in the world a principle which is foreign and even hostile to Him. Does it proceed from an evil spirit which acts upon man? But this only pushes the difficulty further back. For, whence comes the evil will of this spirit? Does it proceed from God? This cannot be true, for God is good, and cannot be the author of evil. Unable to solve these problems, Augustine was thrown into despair.

The transition from this state of perturbation to faith in Christianity was made through the medium of Neoplatonism. To understand the influence which Neoplatonism exercised on Augustine, we must have before our minds a clear idea of its origin and its main features.



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 315

In Neoplatonism we have at once the completion and the euthanasia of Greek philosophy. It presents the strange and instructive spectacle of philosophy reluctantly abandoning its proper method, and falling back upon immediate intuition. Greek philosophy, in the first instance, was a revolt against the traditional religion, with its anthropomorphism, its polytheism, and its mythology. The first philosophers discarded the personifications and figurate conceptions of the popular religion, and fell back upon the idea of some single principle which lay at the basis of all things. In Plato and Aristotle the national religion was universalized, and converted into a monotheism, in which the divine was conceived as a pure intelligence, beyond the world, self-conscious, and self-complete. The Stoics and Epicureans, maintaining a dualistic ethics, and seeking only to construct a system which should give satisfaction to the individual, explained away the national religion by means of allegory. From these systems arose Scepticism, which brought to light the tacit assumption of the two dogmatic schools, that the ultimate nature of the world is beyond the reach of the human mind. It was at this point that Neoplatonism came forward with its doctrine of the inscrutable character of the Absolute, and the necessity of a higher organ than reason for the apprehension of the ultimately real. Despairing of the human intellect in its normal exercise, it fell back upon intuition, and could therefore only define the Absolute as the super-rational. On the other hand, Neoplatonism, in virtue of its descent, could not discard reason without paying a tribute to its power. Reason could not, it is true, bring man into the presence of the absolutely real, but it could at least lift him above the immediate and sensible, and prepare the way for the higher faculty of intuition. But when distrust is

## 316 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

cast upon reason, and it is held that man is unable to comprehend the divine, what can the product of reason be but more or less systematized fictions? Hence the later Neoplatonists fall back upon revelation, and this revelation Neoplatonism, in accordance with its origin, sought in the religious traditions of the various national religions. Since Neoplatonism had learned from the later Stoics to look beyond the limits of nations and states, it found in all religions ideas which had been inspired by God, and especially in those religions which were oldest, and therefore, as was thought, nearest to the divine. This explains why the Neoplatonists gave special weight to the ancient oriental religions. Of course they could not accept these religions with all their confused and fantastic imagery, but by a judicious use of the allegorical method they imported into them a spiritual significance. This was the material which the later Neoplatonists regarded as the basis of philosophy. They sought to construct a philosophy which should sum up all past philosophy, and at the same time to develop a religion which should comprehend within it all earlier religions. The Neoplatonic philosophy, therefore, presupposes the religious syncretism of the third century, and thus becomes a stage in the history of religion. What was its precise influence on Christianity is a difficult question, but there is no doubt that it exercised a direct and powerful influence on western theology, and, above all, on Augustine. In his doctrine of God, matter, the relation of God to the world, freedom, and evil, Augustine learned much from Neoplatonism, though it is also true that he, more than any other early theologian, made explicit the distinction between Neoplatonism and Christianity.

The founder of the Neoplatonic school in Alexandria is supposed to have been Ammonius Saccas,



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 317

who died about the year 245 A.D. His great disciple Plotinus (205-270) may, however, be regarded as the real beginner of a systematic Neoplatonism. Like the Gnostics and his fellow-Neoplatonists, Plotinus sought to give an answer to two questions: (1) How does the Absolute reveal itself? (2) How does man apprehend the Absolute? In seeking to answer the first question, he had recourse to the prevalent view, that there is a series of emanations, partaking partly of the nature of the infinite, partly of the nature of the finite; in attempting to answer the second question, he falls back upon the idea of a divine ecstasy or inspiration, in which man transcends all the distinctions of thought, and at a single bound enters into a mystical union with the Absolute. But while Plotinus adopts the conceptions of emanation and ecstasy, he seeks to avoid the extravagance and caprice of the Gnostics by the introduction of order and coherence into the series of emanations, and by a gradual elevation of the human spirit from its immersion in sense, through a perception of the order and beauty of the world, to a comprehension of the pure forms of existence by the intelligence, and finally to philosophical ecstasy, which he tries to distinguish from pure imagination. As Philo held that Plato had borrowed his doctrine of ideas from Moses, so Plotinus claimed, conversely, that the general agreement of his system with Gnosticism is due to the fact that the east was indebted to the west.

In his doctrine of emanation Plotinus borrows from Plato and Aristotle the conception of three grades of reality—the pure ideas or intelligible forms which constitute the object of the intelligence, the world-soul and the phenomenal world; but he holds that beyond the realm of ideas or intelligible forms is the absolute

One, in which even the distinction of subject and object is transcended, while beneath the phenomenal world is the abstraction of matter or purely potential being. The combination of these five elements—the absolute One, the intelligible forms, the world-soul, the phenomenal world and matter—constitutes the universe; and these grades of being are arranged in a descending series, beginning with the absolute One and ending with matter. In thus adapting Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions to his doctrine of emanation, Plotinus has transformed the elements which he borrows. For Plato and Aristotle there was no reality higher than the intelligible realities which constitute the essence of intelligence, whereas Plotinus makes these merely an incomplete, though true, revelation of the Absolute.<sup>1</sup> The only ultimate reality, as Plotinus holds, is the Absolute—the One as contrasted with the Many, the Infinite as opposed to the Finite. As the source of all being, it is the absolute cause, and the only true being; but, since in it the finite finds its end, it is also the good. We cannot, however, predicate moral properties of the Absolute, because all determination is limitation. The absolute One is therefore without extension, life, or thought, and even the predicate of being is inadequate,—not because the Absolute is empty, but because no finite predicate or sum of predicates can characterize it. By its very nature it is absolutely pure, and has, therefore, no material substrate. We must rather define it as pure energy. As such the Absolute necessarily produces being distinct from itself in an eternal, timeless, and necessary process, but without being itself in any way affected, since there is in the Absolute itself no

<sup>1</sup> There are, however, tendencies towards the Mysticism of Plotinus in Plato and Aristotle. See Caird's *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, II. 236 ff.

process. The origination of finite being is therefore an emanation from the Absolute, of which it is an image or mirror. The further it is from the original being the less adequately it participates in the Absolute, just as light diminishes in brilliancy the further it is from its source. Thus the totality of being constitutes a graduated series of concentric circles, ultimately vanishing away in non-being; which, however, is not to be conceived as pure nothing, but as that being in which the nature of the Absolute is at its lowest degree of manifestation. Each stage of being is connected with the higher, so that the lower participates in the Absolute only immediately through the next higher. The whole realm of the finite, however, longs and strives after the higher, so far as its nature allows.

The first emanation from the Absolute is the *Noûs*, which is a perfect image of the Absolute and the prototype of all things. In it there is a complete unity of being and thought, ideal world and idea. As image the *Noûs* is identical in nature with the Absolute, as derivative it is entirely different. By *Noûs* Plotinus means the highest sphere which the human mind is capable of conceiving (*κόσμος νοῦτος*) and at the same time pure thought itself. What is grasped by reason is in the Absolute; it is not the Absolute itself, but only the primal manifestation of it. This manifestation, however, reason completely comprehends. So far as "ideas" are causes of events, they are called *λόγοι*.

The *Noûs* is itself unchangeable, but it throws out an image of itself, namely, the world-soul, which, like the *Noûs*, is an immaterial substance. It is related to the *Noûs* as the latter is related to the Absolute. Its illumination it derives from the *Noûs*, which

## 320 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

entirely interpenetrates it, but it is itself in contact with the phenomenal world. The world-soul is capable of preserving its unity in the *Noûs*, but it may also unite with the corporeal world and thus be divided into parts. In its essence it constitutes the one single soul—the world-soul—but in this single soul are many individual souls, which may either permit themselves to be ruled by the *Noûs* or may lose themselves in the finite.

The soul, which is in its nature changeable, produces the corporeal or phenomenal world. When at its best it reduces the many to harmony. Plotinus celebrates the beauty and glory of the world, and in this respect he differs from the Christian Gnostics who regarded the phenomenal world as evil. When the idea subdues matter to itself, when soul rules over body, the world is beautiful and good. It is a shadowy image of the upper world, and the various degrees of better and worse are necessary to the perfect harmony of the whole. In point of fact, however, the phenomenal world exhibits a strife of opposites. The result is a conflict in which there is a perpetual coming to be and ceasing to be. The explanation of this conflict is that there is in bodies a material substrate. Matter is the indeterminate, that which is destitute of all quality, the *μὴ ὅν*. As devoid of form and idea, it is evil; as capable of form, it occupies an intermediate position.

The process of spiritual life consists in a gradual ascent to God in an order the inverse of that by which the Absolute has revealed itself in the series of emanations. The human souls which have descended into bodies are involved in the sensible, and are the victims of desire, which causes them to seek for liberation from true being. But they are capable



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 321

of returning to the higher life, for their freedom is inextinguishable. The soul must therefore, to attain its true being, ascend to the source from which it came. In this return consists virtue, which is the effort after God and leads to God. Plotinus in his ethical theory appropriates, and arranges in a graduated series, all the older systems of morality. Lowest of all are the virtues of the ordinary citizen; then come the purifying virtues, and lastly the divine virtues. The virtues of the citizen merely adorn life without elevating the soul. The purifying virtues, on the other hand, free the soul from the sensible and bring it back to itself, and thus to the *Noûs*. By this elevation man again becomes a spiritual and moral being, and is liberated from all sin. But a still higher stage has to be reached, which shall not only elevate the soul above sin, but in which it shall be merged in God. This takes place by the intuition of the Absolute, that is, by ecstatic elevation to God. Thought does not reach to this elevation, for thought attains only to the *Noûs*, and is itself a process. Thought is but a preparation for union with God. The soul can know and come in contact with the Absolute only in the state of perfect rest and passivity. Hence, in order to attain to the higher, it must be subjected to a spiritual process. It has to begin with the contemplation of corporeal things, their multiplicity and their harmony; it then returns into itself, and retires into the depths of its own nature; from whence it ascends to the *Noûs*, to the world of ideas. There, however, it does not find the One and highest; a voice still calls to it: "Not we have made ourselves." Hence it must plunge into the deepest depths, where all remembrance of things is lost. Then it perceives God—the source

## 322 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of life, the principle of being, the cause of all goodness, the root of souls. At this moment it enjoys the highest and most indescribable felicity: it is as it were absorbed in God, lost in the light of Eternity.

The religious philosophy of Plotinus was of an abstract character and independent of the national religions. In accommodation to the popular consciousness, however, he represented the *Noûs*, which emanated from the Original Being, as so to speak a second God, and the *λόγοι* contained in it as if they were gods. Plotinus also gave a new form to the myths, and defended magic, prophecy and prayer. Compared with later Neoplatonists, he is free from superstition and fanaticism, nor did he favour the restoration of the ancient worship of the gods. Among his disciples were Aurelius and Porphyry. Aurelius is probably the writer who had the most direct influence on Augustine. He modified the doctrine of Plotinus in some points, and endeavoured to show that the prologue to the Gospel of John was in harmony with the Neoplatonic philosophy. Porphyry was not an original thinker, but rather an industrious and careful investigator, with a considerable gift for historical criticism. The fact that a man of this type devoted himself entirely to the defence of the philosophy of Plotinus and of polytheistic mysticism shows how strongly the current of the age ran in the direction of religious mysticism. For Porphyry the end of philosophy is the salvation of the soul. Evil has its origin, not in the body, but in the desires of the soul. Hence Porphyry demands the strictest self-restraint, along with the knowledge of God. While he protested strongly against the crude popular faith, he had no desire to destroy the national religions.

His polemical work against the Christians was not directed against Christ, but against Catholic Christianity, and the sacred books accepted by the Christians of his age, which Porphyry believed to be written by men who were either deceivers or grossly ignorant. The transition from Porphyry to a Neoplatonism of a lower type was made by Jamblichus, who endeavoured to justify all the ancient cults by means of philosophy. We may explain this phase of Neoplatonism by the fact that the philosophy of Plotinus was too abstract to appeal to the popular mind. In one or two points Jamblichus made an advance, e.g. in the idea that evil has its seat in the will, a point which is strongly emphasized by Augustine. Jamblichus also insisted strongly upon the divine character of the human soul, as taught by Plotinus.<sup>1</sup>

What specially attracted Augustine to Neoplatonism was its spiritual conception of God, its doctrine of the *Δόγμα*, particularly as connected by Aurelius with the *Δόγμα* of the Fourth Gospel, its high conception of the human soul, and its apparent reconciliation of evil with the perfection of God. Until he came under the influence of Ambrose and Neoplatonism, Augustine had not been able to free himself from the Manichaean conception of God as an infinitely extended light. Neoplatonism taught him to conceive of the universe in an entirely different way. The true nature of things, as he now learned, is to be found, not in the material parts of which they are composed, but in the form or inner order which they display. Apart from this form, we can have no knowledge of the real nature of body, and without it body could not exist. It is mind, however, by which the form of

<sup>1</sup> With the account of Neoplatonism here given, cf. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, i. 774 ff.

## 324 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

things is discerned. The mind finds within itself the conception of perfect forms, which are suggested by the visible appearance of things. Thus the mind sees in external things merely an imperfect copy of the true realities or forms, which it finds within itself. These intelligible realities, however, have no independent existence. There must be an ultimate principle which is the best of all existences—a supreme beauty, truth, and goodness—a sovereign unity, which has ordained all order, beauty, and goodness; in a word, God. It is therefore utterly unworthy of God to represent Him as an infinitely extended magnitude: His nature is absolutely incorporeal; He is the intelligible sun of the upper world, which He contains within Himself, and He is present in visible objects, not spacially, but spiritually; that is, in the order, beauty, and truth found in them.

When he had obtained a glimpse of this spiritual idea of God and the world, Augustine was filled with delight. Now, for the first time, he felt as if he possessed something like a worthy conception of things. Nor was this all, for Neoplatonism seemed to supply a real solution of the problem of evil, whereas Manichaeism did little more than state the problem without solving it. To maintain that there are two eternal principles, which cannot in any way be reduced to one, was inconsistent with the unity of God, which was now so clear to him. But, if God is One and Infinite, how are we to explain the existence of evil? As it now seemed to Augustine, Neoplatonism gave a rational solution of the difficulty. If the true nature of a thing consists in its form, not in the matter of which it is composed, we must seek for the explanation of evil, not in matter, but in form. Now, the form of a thing is the orderly mode in which it exists. A thing



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 325

is said to be good solely because it has a particular form, which is appropriate to it. Every substance is, therefore, good in so far as it is capable of existing ; for nothing can exist which does not in some way realize its own essence. There are, however, degrees of goodness. The only being, who can in an absolute sense be said to exist, is God, for God alone is self-existent. All created things have in them an element of negation, and therefore their being can only be partial and relative ; so that it is impossible for them to be perfectly good. The innumerable beings which compose the universe form an immense hierarchy. Those which participate more fully in being are better, those which participate less fully in being are worse, so that the degree of goodness in each thing is exactly determined by its degree of existence. Nevertheless, all things are good. They have the same degree of goodness as of being, that is, of form. It follows that there is no absolute evil : when we call anything evil without limitation, we are employing a term which marks the limited point of view of those who forget that nothing can be good in an absolute sense but God. And when we view all things in relation to the whole for which they have been made, we see that the universe in its totality is perfectly good, and reveals the wisdom of the supreme Good.

By the same principle we can explain what is called moral evil. In a being endowed with free-will, evil consists in turning away from God, the absolute being and the absolute good, and from the intelligible realities which reside in God ; that is, in turning towards lower things, towards sensible and external realities, which have less being and less good. On the other hand, in turning towards higher things, the soul obtains more being and good. He who sins has less

## 326 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

being, and, in the suffering which follows the commission of sin, he becomes aware of a power which determines the order of the world. In whatever way, therefore, we contemplate evil, we see that the supposed opposition between divine providence and the power of evil disappears. Evil is not in contradiction with God, because evil has no positive or substantial existence, but is purely negative. All that is substantial or positive is good, and hence philosophy reveals to us no flaw in the constitution of the universe.

Neoplatonism thus seemed to solve the problem by which Augustine had for so long been disturbed. But with the satisfaction of his intellect, he had not, as he tells us, found a way of escape from the passions to which he was still a slave. He therefore made a diligent study of the Scriptures, and in particular of the Epistles of St. Paul, expecting to find in them all the doctrines which he had already learned from the Neoplatonists. In reality he found much more: he there discovered, not only the same high conception of God, but a way by which his heart and his will might be turned to God. Neoplatonism had pointed out the goal, but it had not supplied the means of reaching it. "It is one thing," says Augustine, "to see the land of peace from the wooded top of a mountain, and another thing to enter upon the path that leads to it" (Conf. vii. 21). What Augustine here especially had in his mind, if we may judge from his later thoughts, is the doctrine of the Incarnation. Neoplatonism had taught him the existence of a purely spiritual God, who governs the world by His wisdom, but it had not shown him the inner nature of God; on the contrary, it denied that God can be known as He is. In the Scriptures, on the other hand, he believed



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 327

that he found clearly proclaimed under the name of the Word, the only begotten Son of God, what the inner nature of God was. God had in Jesus Christ revealed Himself as Love, as taking upon Himself the nature of man, suffering and dying for us, and in the contemplation of this infinite goodness he found the force necessary to triumph over his evil passions.

The account just given of Augustine's transition from Neoplatonism to Christianity may be stated more precisely as follows. When Augustine had learned from Neoplatonism that God is Spirit, he sought to find a way to God by an analysis of his own inner experience. The hint of this "new way of ideas" he obtained from Neoplatonism, but his mode of carrying out the hint was all his own. Granting, he says, as Descartes afterwards did, that external experience gives no firm basis for truth, at least we cannot doubt our own inner experience. It may be true that evil has no objective reality, but at least the fear of evil is a real experience, and therefore is for us an evil. So the object of faith is nothing visible, but faith itself is a direct object of consciousness. Let us, therefore, see if the knowledge of ourselves does not lead to the knowledge of God. It is for this reason that Augustine was so unwearied in his observation of inner experience; this, as it seemed to him, was the most hopeful method of arriving at a better knowledge of God. Examining his own soul, he found that, like all other beings, man is ever seeking to complete his being. All the desires are modes of this primary desire. These desires give content to the will, and yet the will stands above them as a power higher than the sensible. It is only, however, when the will wills what is good that it is really free, because only in willing the good can true being be realized.

## 328 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Man, then, is ever striving after true being. But wherein does true being consist? Neoplatonism had led Augustine up to the supreme unchangeable permanent Being. But if this is the only true being, all else, including the human soul, must in itself be non-being; and so far as it has a relative being, it is the product of the one divine Being. As proceeding from God, the universe is a harmonious whole, expressing the beauty of its original; but God Himself is the One truly beautiful. In itself the universe is nothing: it is at best but the image of the infinite fulness of the one only Being. This mystical conception of the universe Augustine never quite transcended, though it is perpetually crossed by the different conception of God as self-revealing, and though he goes on to add elements inconsistent with it. From his psychological analysis he had learned that men are ever striving after true being: they hunger and thirst after God; for the soul, so far as it has being, is *ex deo* and *ad deum*. But



## AUGUSTINE'S PHASES OF FAITH 329

not privation of being. "Nothing is good but a good will": this proposition is connected by Augustine in the closest way with the proposition, "Nothing is good but God"; and the one is mediated with the other by the idea of Love. God, as the source of all being, is also the sole author, and the sole source, of good in the form of self-communicating Love. Man, as a creature, is only in so far as he surrenders himself, lives only by dying, is free only as he wills God.

## LECTURE THIRTEENTH.

### AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGY.

THE sketch of Augustine's spiritual development given in last lecture has prepared the way for an understanding of his theology, to a consideration of which the present lecture will be devoted. When we consider the manifold elements which went to the making of Augustine's theology, we cannot be surprised that he does not succeed in constructing a perfectly symmetrical system. He is in many respects a pioneer, and not less so because he imagines that he is simply appropriating the creed of the Church. In what has yet to be said I shall try to indicate the various elements that go to form the massive and imposing body of doctrine, which he left as a legacy to posterity. I shall, therefore, give a short statement of the main doctrines of Augustine, pointing out incidentally what he owed to Neoplatonism, and attempting to estimate how far his theology is an attempt to combine inconsistent principles. That Augustine was the first to give Catholic Christianity a definitely Neoplatonic colouring is beyond question, though it is no doubt true that Ambrose had already prepared the way. This in itself, however, is no ground for rejecting the Augustinian system. It is part of the strength of

Christianity that it has been able to assimilate whatever is in harmony with its fundamental intuitions, and those who imagine that a system of doctrine is condemned because it can be shown to have absorbed elements apparently foreign to it, seem to me to have a very imperfect idea of the true relation of primitive Christianity to its own history. It is just because it has had the power of assimilating such various and at first sight contradictory elements, that Christianity has had so potent an influence on the world. Its antagonists had to die that it might live, but their death was rather a sublimation of what they were feeling after than mere annihilation. The question then is, not whether Augustine's theology was influenced by Neoplatonism—for this is beyond the reach of doubt—but whether by its aid he succeeded in constructing a perfectly satisfactory system.

The account which has been given of Augustine's development makes it evident that there were two main ideas with which he was continually occupied—God and sin. The idea of God is the centre around which all his thoughts revolve. What he seeks to discover is, how man may come into union with God; God is for him One and All; and in the contemplation of God he finds the highest blessedness. As we have seen, it was in his desire to preserve the majesty of God that he became a Manichaeian; and for the same reason he abandoned Manichaeism, when he was convinced that it was dishonouring to God, and adopted the Neoplatonic conception of the absolutely spiritual nature of God. In his psychological investigations also the same motive was at work, for he was interested in psychology mainly because he accepted the Neoplatonic view that we can know God only by knowing ourselves.

## 332 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

By his study of Scripture Augustine was led to see, that, while Neoplatonism had a high conception of the nature of God, it failed to grasp the fundamental truth that God is essentially self-manifesting. Neoplatonism, it is true, maintained that God manifests Himself in the Word, which it also calls the Son of God ; but the Word is viewed as merely an emanation from God, not as a complete manifestation of his inner being, which remains absolutely unrevealed. Now, Augustine believed that, in His Son, God had completely revealed His own nature, and that from the Father and the Son proceeded the Holy Spirit, which was also identical in nature with both. This truth he found expressed in the doctrine of the Church, that there is one God in three Persons. Augustine is well aware that in speaking of three Persons there is a danger of denying the unity of God, and yet he insists that we must maintain at once the unity and the distinction. We might, he says, express the doctrine, in the language of the Greek fathers, by saying that in God there is one "essence" (*οὐσία*), three "substances" (*ὑποστάσεις*) ; but, as the Latin tongue uses the terms "essence" and "substance" synonymously, this would involve the contradiction of saying that in God there is one "substance" or "essence," which is also "three substances" or "essences." Now, God cannot be one in the same sense in which He is three ; it is therefore better to say that God is one "substance" in three "persons." We must, however, be careful to avoid the doctrine that the three "persons" are three separate individuals, each of which can be called God ; for this would either imply that there are three Gods, or, if we make the "substance" a separate existence, that there are four Gods. If then there is but one God, and we yet distinguish the three persons, the distinction

can only consist in the function which is assigned to each of the three persons. God is completely present in each of the persons, but present in a different way. The Father begets the Son, the Son is begotten by the Father, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. In order to make this doctrine more intelligible, Augustine argues that, as the world and especially man is the image of God, we may learn in a measure the nature of God by discovering the nature of the world, and above all the nature of man. Now, the mind of man is in its essence one, and yet this unity is manifested in three different, though not separate functions—memory, intelligence and will. In memory the mind retains what is, in intelligence it understands what it retains, and without will there could be neither memory nor intelligence. While, therefore, we distinguish these three modes of activity of the mind, we must also observe that in each of them the whole mind is active. It would be a confusion between the finite and infinite to transfer these distinctions unchanged to God, for man is neither co-eternal nor consubstantial with God, but, since the mind of man is made in the image of God, we are entitled to say that the unity-in-distinction which we find in our own self-consciousness is an analogue of the unity in three persons of God. It is true that we cannot entirely comprehend the nature of God, but we may surely say that God the Father expresses the self-existence of God, God the Son His self-knowledge or wisdom, God the Holy Spirit His self-satisfaction or love. Father, Son and Spirit are different forms of the same essence, and these different forms are different functions of the three persons, the total divine self-consciousness consisting in the circle of these three functions. The function of each Person, therefore, consists in this, that it contributes

## 334 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

to the production of the divine self-consciousness. But these three functions do not destroy the unity of the one divine essence. The Father is the whole essence under the form of memory, the Son the whole essence under the form of wisdom, the Spirit the whole essence under the form of love.<sup>1</sup>

The distinction of persons in God therefore means for Augustine the distinction of the different functions which are essential to the divine self-consciousness. Wherein, then, consists the essence of God? Since in this essence God is absolutely single, His being, goodness and wisdom are identical. Augustine does not mean that in God there is no distinction of attributes, but that in Him they are so inseparably united that we cannot possibly think the one without thinking the other. We know God rather through direct vision or contemplation than by discursive thought, for in discursive thought we pass from one attribute to the other. Augustine is, therefore, seeking at once to preserve the distinction of attributes and to combine them into unity. There can be no separation of attributes in God, because, if there were, they would fall outside of the divine essence, and would therefore be contingent. For Augustine the absoluteness of God is bound up with His perfect simplicity; or, what for him is the same thing, with the inseparability of his attributes.<sup>2</sup>

The reason why Augustine insists so emphatically upon the unity of God is intelligible, when we remember what his development had been. After his liberation from Manichaeism, what he was most interested in was, not the distinction of the three

<sup>1</sup> *De Trinitate*, v. 9-10; vi. 6, 8, 11; xi. 1-3; xii. 20. *De Anima*, ii. 3. *De Civitate Dei*, xi. 26. *Confessiones*, xiii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo*, lii. 8-10.

persons in the Trinity, but the indivisible unity of the divine essence. Hence, when he came to state his doctrine of the Trinity, he naturally emphasized the unity of God, rather than the distinction of persons. Accordingly, in his doctrine of the persons, he maintains that the three Persons are equal forms or modes of being, so that the second and third persons are in no sense subordinated to the first. We have here in fact the logical completion of the Trinitarian doctrine, and as we may also say, the first consistent attempt to formulate the Christian conception of a self-conscious, self-determining and self-revealing God. But, while in the doctrine of the equality of the three Persons, Augustine has made a distinct advance, it cannot be denied that, in his eagerness to preserve the unity of the divine nature, he tends to represent the essence of God as if it were distinct from the Persons, or at least to accentuate the simplicity at the expense of the distinction of the divine nature. The problem therefore remains, to explain how this simple essence is related to the three Persons. The solution indeed is impossible, so long as we hold by the absolute simplicity of the divine essence. Obviously, the one conception by which a reconciliation can be effected is to grasp the idea, that the only true unity is one which involves distinction within itself. There was therefore in Augustine's doctrine the danger of falling back upon the distinctionless unity of the divine nature, and regarding the distinction of the Persons as merely subjective. Here in fact, as I think, we have in Augustine's doctrine a clear instance of the power of Neoplatonism over him. He is prevented, by his perception of the importance of holding fast by the idea of God as self-manifesting, from admitting

## 336 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

that God is indefinable, but he is unable to reconcile his doctrine of the three Persons with the conception, taken from Neoplatonism, of the absolute simplicity of the divine nature.

We have seen what is Augustine's conception of the divine essence and the Persons of the Trinity; we have now to see how he conceives of the relation of God to the world. The world has been created according to a divine plan: in what form, then, did this plan exist in the divine mind? "There is only one wisdom," says Augustine (*De civ. xi. 10*), "in which are infinite treasures of intelligible things, and in these intelligible things are all the invisible and unchangeable reasons of the things that are visible and changeable." In this passage Augustine seems to say that the objects of the divine wisdom are the forms or ideas, which contain the unchangeable grounds of all things. It would thus seem that he distinguishes between the divine intelligence and the ideal realities which it contemplates. Such a separation, however, was for Augustine impossible. The only ideas which he can admit are the divine attributes, which have no independent existence, but constitute the very nature of God. From this point of view it would seem that the object of God can only be God's own nature. God's knowledge of Himself would thus seem to exclude any knowledge of the world. On the other hand, Augustine draws a distinction between God's knowledge of Himself and His knowledge of the world, and maintains in the strongest way the distinction of God from the world. The knowledge of the world is not merely the knowledge of its eternal universal laws, but also of what takes place in it. God contemplates all things at a glance, so that what for us appears in

time is for Him timeless. There are thus two competing conceptions in Augustine. On the one hand, he tends to identify the eternal purpose of God with the divine essence, and, on the other hand, he seeks to distinguish this purpose from God's knowledge of Himself. If we take the former view, we seem to fall into an abstract unity in which all the finite and temporal disappears; if we take the latter view, it is hard to see how the unity of the divine nature is to be preserved. Nor is the difficulty lessened, if we look at the question from the side of the will. Whatever God knows, He must also will, for in Him knowledge and will are identical. Now, Augustine cannot admit that God has willed evil. He *permits* but does not *will* it. There must, therefore, be a distinction between God's knowledge and His will; for God knows all things—evil as well as good—whereas there is a distinction in His will, since He does not will evil, but only permits it. But if this is so, God's will cannot be identical with His knowledge, and therefore His essence is not absolutely simple. We must, therefore, either surrender the divine simplicity, or deny that the world has an existence independent of God.

Granting that there exists in the divine mind a knowledge of the world that is to be, Augustine's next problem is to explain how the world can come into being, consistently with the absolute completeness of God apart from the world. On the one hand, the origination of the world cannot add to the sum of being, and, on the other hand, the world cannot be identified with God. Augustine's answer to this problem is his doctrine of Creation. To obviate the difficulty that the origination of the world adds to the completeness of God, he maintains,

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This is, indeed, demanded by the omnipotence of God. Nor can we suppose that formless matter was created prior to the formed world, but matter and form were created at once. And, though the world is not coëternal with God, we must not suppose that the Word by which it was created implied any change in the divine mind, for the creation of the world was already involved in the eternal purpose of God. "In the Word of God there existed the eternal reasons of all things, even of those which have been made temporally." To ask why God willed the creation of the world, is to ask for the cause of that which is its own cause: the will of God is the cause, and to ask for something beyond that will is to ask for something greater than God's will, i.e. for something greater than that which is the source of all greatness. The world has not been created from all eternity, but we cannot say that there was any succession in the divine will; for time is not applicable to the divine will, but only to things that are finite and changeable.<sup>1</sup>

This brings us to Augustine's doctrine of time, by means of which he seeks to solve the difficulty as to how there can be an eternal creation of a temporal world. Time, as he maintains, has no meaning apart from change, and therefore it is not in God, but only in the world. Change, however, follows from the combination of negation with the *divina operatio*. The ground of change, and therefore of time, lies in things, not in God: for God is by His nature absolutely unchangeable, and therefore not in Time. God is related to the world as its cause, but we cannot say that He exists prior to the world: He is prior to it

<sup>1</sup> *Retract.* i. 11; *Conf.* x. 3, 5; *De Fide et Symbolo*, i. 2; *De Genesi ad litteram*, iv. 6; *De Diversis Questionibus*, lxxiii., quest. xxviii.; *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 4.

## 340 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

logically not temporally. God does not act at one time, nor at another: His power or activity is absolutely unchangeable: what produces change is the negative element implied in all finite things.<sup>1</sup>

The relation of God to space is of peculiar interest, because it involves a consideration of the corporeal world. Space has no meaning except in relation to body. Augustine does not accept the view of Origen, that earthly bodies are the consequence of sin. There is nothing evil in body as such; for, as Augustine holds, in common with the Neoplatonists, the existence of the body does not destroy the harmony of the world. What distinguishes bodies is that, in the series of created things, they are most affected by negation; in other words, they have less being than mind. Accordingly, the imagination of body in the soul has more reality than body itself. It of course follows that God is inextended and entirely beyond space.<sup>2</sup>

It is not possible for Augustine to draw an absolute distinction between the creation and the preservation of the world. We cannot say that there is any rest in the divine activity. The form of the divine activity has never changed, and therefore there can be no break in it.<sup>3</sup>

The providence of God is held by Augustine to extend to all things. But we find in him two different views. On the one hand, he maintains that God has made everything according to His wisdom; in other words, that whatever is positive in things is due to the *divina operatio*. On the other hand, he holds that creatures act on one another, and thus produce manifold changes. From this point of view, he regards providence as the ground of the order or harmony in

<sup>1</sup> *De Civ. xi. 6*; *De Gen. v. 5.*

<sup>2</sup> *Civ. xi. 23*; *xii. 5.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Gen. iv. 12*; *v. 20.*

things. The whole universe is an orderly system, which may be compared to a beautiful poem. Thus God seems rather to act through the medium of His creatures, while He himself remains unchangeable. Providence is nothing but the eternal plan of the world, according to which all is ordered as it is realized in the world. The divine plan realizes itself by means of the creatures which are subject to it, whose essence and being belong to the *immutabilis operatio divina*, but whose differences and development are due to negation.<sup>1</sup>

We must now direct particular attention to the Augustinian view of the relation of man to God. The main interest of Augustine in this question arises from its connection with the problem of moral evil. When Augustine abandoned Manichaeism, he could no longer admit that anything is by nature evil. Since all things proceed from God, while yet negation attaches to every finite being, he denies that anything is in itself evil. Hence Adam, when he proceeded from the hand of God, had nothing evil in his nature. Nor could Augustine accept the doctrine of Pelagius, that man is endowed with an absolute capacity of free choice, his will having no bias either to good or to evil, and that no exercise of will in any way affects this freedom. Man's true freedom consists in obedience to God. The first man was, therefore, not in a state of indifference to good and evil; on the contrary his will was directed to good, and his intelligence showed him that his good consisted in obedience to God. But, if man's will was originally good, how are we to explain the origin of sin? Augustine's answer is that man's will was not so absolutely directed to good that he was unable to sin. What led him to adopt this view was the necessity of explaining the origin of sin without attributing it to

<sup>1</sup> *Conf.* iii. 11; *De Ordine*, i. 10.

## 342 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

God. Adam, by the help of God, could have willed to obey, but he had also the power of refusing the help of God, and in this refusal consisted his sin. Augustine, therefore, limits man's freedom of choice as far as possible. The freedom of Adam consisted in his power to will the acceptance of divine aid. The enormity of Adam's sin arose from the fact that he refused this aid, notwithstanding his good will and his clear intelligence. The metaphysical justification of this theory lies in Augustine's Neoplatonic doctrine, that all independence of the creature, as opposed to God, is based on negation. The positive power of self-maintenance comes from God, but what is characteristic of the individual as such is made possible only by the element of negation implied in his finitude, and this cannot be ascribed to the *divina operatio*. The free-will of man, however, distinguishes him from other creatures ; for, while they maintain themselves by necessity in accordance with the divine plan, man by his free-will is not under necessity to conform to it. The possibility of self-determination is therefore limited to the sphere within which the negative element operates. All that is positive comes from God, and man can only will to accept the aid of God ; but, on the other hand, he may will to refuse the divine aid. The will is therefore able either to subordinate itself to God by accepting the divine aid, or it may strive after independence of God, and thus lose its true freedom. We may understand from this how Augustine connects pride or self-assertion with the privation of being. Self-assertion intensifies the negative element, and thus diminishes man's true being ; for true being can exist only in union with God. The sin of Adam, then, in Augustine's view, consisted in a voluntary lessening of the force of being, and at the same time in a striving after a false

independence. It is at once *privatio boni* and *superbia*. This fall from true being is contrary to nature, because it is contrary to the divine plan of the world ; it is, therefore, opposed to the true nature of man, which demands harmony with God. Sin is an *amor perversus*, *inordinatus*, an inversion of the original order. From the point of view of *superbia* it is a surrender of *obedientia*, because it is a striving after independence of God. To sin is to elect for the empty or negative element in the world, instead of willing what is in harmony with the divine order. The Pelagians admitted that *ignorantia* was the result of sin, but they contended that this did not affect the will ; Augustine, on the other hand, maintains that the will as well as the intellect is affected. In contrast to the Pelagians, he also maintains that *concupiscentia* is sinful, because it consists in the subordination of the spirit to the body : it is the result, not the cause, of weakness of will. *Concupiscentia* arises, in the first instance, not from the body, but from the spirit. The needs of the body are in themselves innocent, for Christ had a body without *concupiscentia*.<sup>1</sup>

The consequences of sin are punishment and guilt. All sin, except the first sin of Adam, Augustine regards as *poena peccati*. The corrupt will is no longer free. When Adam fell, he willed to turn away from God, but he did not will the painful consequences of his act. When, however, he sinned, he had to bear these consequences. After the fall the will was powerless to do what was pleasing to God, and this impotence is *poena peccati*. Thus Adam's posterity have lost even the power to will the divine aid. The first man by his fall into sin has brought all men

<sup>1</sup> *De Natura Boni*, 19; *Civ.* xiii. 14; xv. 21; xii. 6; *Enchir.* 106; *Corr. et Gratia*, 10, 12; *De Nat. et Gratia*, 61.

## 344 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

into the sinful state, and from this state they are absolutely powerless to raise themselves. The sin which passes from Adam to all his posterity is therefore the punishment of Adam's sin. The central point of the controversy with the Pelagians was in regard to the manner in which sin passes from the first man to the whole race. All that the Pelagians would admit was, that Adam's posterity were exposed to the temptation of evil example, and to the influence of evil custom, which made good acts more difficult. They denied that these powers were so strong that they could not be overcome, and maintained that even before Christ there were sinless men. Augustine, on the other hand, sought to show that man is infected by sin even at his birth, and that in the two forms of *ignorantia* and *infirmitas*, i.e. both in intelligence and will. As children inherit sin, they naturally inherit the guilt of sin. In Adam, as Augustine maintains, all have pre-existed, and in him all have fallen, and have therefore participated in Adam's guilt. Because all are sinful and all are guilty, all are justly punished, and therefore are subject to death. Adam's sin was the act of the whole race, his guilt the guilt of the whole race, his punishment the suffering of the whole race. Man after the fall is a *massa perditionis*, and as all are sinful, it is just that all should be condemned. Without Christ, therefore, man is absolutely powerless for good. Augustine, however, refuses to accept the Manichaean doctrine that the nature of man is evil: nature, as such, is always good. Original sin is a defect which can be removed by grace. The will which is evil must be converted by grace, for by his own powers man cannot be righteous.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Imp.* iv. 100; *Pecc. Mer.* i. 15; *De Gratia Christi*, 39; *Civ.* xiii. 14; *De Praedest. Sancti*. 8; *Genes. ad Litt.* x. 12; *De Nat. et Gr.* 34.

The greatest difficulty in Augustine's doctrine of sin is to reconcile it with his idea of the divine nature. If the world would have been better had Adam willed the good, how are we to explain the existence of evil, in harmony with the divine omnipotence? It is no doubt true that evil must subserve the harmony of the world; but it is not Augustine's view that evil is necessary, since he admits the formal freedom of Adam, and always maintains that evil is contrary to the divine will. Now, if evil is not necessary, and is even contrary to the will of God, how can it be said that nothing takes place contrary to the will of God? Here there seems to be an insoluble contradiction. Augustine comes nearest to a solution in his view of the final cause of the world. The good of the world and its supreme end he regards as consisting in a realization of the divine will. The ethical will of God would thus seem to be an end subordinate to the harmony of the universe. Whatever the creature may do, it cannot overthrow the supreme divine will, which consists in the harmony of the moral and the other attributes of God. This idea of harmony plays a very important part in the theology of Augustine. Since evil is subservient to the harmony of the world, in so far as the good is thrown into relief by its opposite, it subserves the revelation of the justice and love of God, just because it is antagonistic to His ethical will. As the revelation of the divine beauty, the world is a complete work of art, a beautiful poem of the Creator, presenting above all the divine love and justice.<sup>1</sup>

Augustine was led to his doctrine of grace by his own development. As we have seen, he reached a stage of scepticism, from which he sought to escape

<sup>1</sup> *Civ. xii. 3.*

## 346 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

by falling back upon the necessity of divine illumination. We must believe, because we cannot know. It has, however, to be borne in mind that, according to Augustine, God alone is the source of true knowledge, and that the blindness of the intellect arises from the fact that it has turned away from God. Thus the scepticism of Augustine is in harmony with his doctrine of sin. It is sin that prevents us from being filled with the light of God. Faith is, therefore, a gift of God, by which the darkness of the intellect is removed. Moreover, Augustine in his own experience had learned the impotence of the will to reform the life, even when the intellect is convinced of the spirituality of God. Hence the necessity of divine grace. In the individual, grace operates by the production of faith, humility, and love. The content of faith, as Augustine holds in contrast to the Pelagians, does not consist merely in the law. The law leads to good only from the fear of punishment. It merely awakens our consciousness of guilt, for we know that we cannot fulfil it. Hence the law is not the essential content of Christian faith. The essential content of faith is the consciousness of our own sinfulness and complete impotence, as well as of the saving grace which is given only in Christ and His work. What has made the coming of Christ necessary is sin, guilt, and punishment; thus the general content of faith is, that Christ is He who frees man from sin, guilt, and punishment, and restores him to his original state of purity. But, while sin is contrary to the will of God, the guilt of sin is not guilt against God. Even sin is subservient to the highest will of God, serving as it does to reveal the harmony of all His attributes. And as there is no guilt against God, so Christ has not reconciled God Himself, but He has

done a work within the sphere of revelation, by which the revelation of justice can, without injustice, be effected. Thus the process of salvation takes place within the world, while God Himself remains unchanged. Augustine's view therefore is, that Christ gave His blood as a ransom for our guilt to the devil, who, as the representative of the divine justice of punishment, had a just claim on us as sinners.<sup>1</sup>

Augustine's doctrine of predestination is the logical result of his view of the impotence of man without the grace of God, when it is brought into connection with his conception of the divine plan of the world. Since he denies that man is free to will the good, he is forced, in consistency, to maintain that it is not because God foreknows men will be good that He predestinates them, but He predestinates them in order that they may be good. Why some are predestinated to life, others to death, Augustine confesses that he does not know: this is a mystery hidden in the depths of the divine wisdom. We are not able to see the wisdom of God in particular cases, and must content ourselves with a general apprehension of the revelation of the divine harmony. Thus man becomes merely an organ of divine revelation. Goodness has no worth in itself, because evil as well as good may be the organ of revelation.<sup>2</sup>

What is the relation of predestination to historical evolution? There are many passages in which Augustine says that predestination concerns the way and mode in which that which has been determined by God is definitely realized. Here the work of Christ has its historical significance, though only for the elect who are chosen in Him, as He Himself is

<sup>1</sup> *Util. Cred.* 8; *Spir. et Lit.* 19; *Civ.* ix. 15; *Trin.* xiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Praed. Sct.* 17, 18, 19.

## 348 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the primary instance of free election. The principle that in reality everything happens in accordance with the law of cause and effect, has its place in predestination. This, however, does not explain how *real* changes can take place consistently with the unchangeable activity of God—a difficulty which, on Augustine's general principles, is insoluble.<sup>1</sup>

If historical events are predestinated, is not all action superfluous? Augustine answers, that it is predetermined in the divine will that what is predestinated can only be realized by means of external causes. Since, therefore, we do not know who are predestinated, it is incumbent on us to extend the Gospel to the utmost of our power. To the objection that prayer is superfluous, he answers that prayer is a means of grace, and the means of grace are necessary as external media, though no doubt their favourable or unfavourable action depends upon whether a man is predestinated or not.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Augustine in some cases virtually denies that, from the point of view of God, the intermediation of particular means is necessary for the realization of what is predestinated. In the eye of God the man who is predestinated to salvation is already a *filius pacis* even before his conversion. On this side, the doctrine of predestination threatens to destroy all historical evolution, and to make even the historical manifestation of Christ superfluous. There is, therefore, in Augustine's doctrine of predestination a contradiction, since on the one hand historical evolution is necessary, on the other hand it is indifferent.<sup>3</sup>

In estimating the influence of Augustine, we must remember that he was not merely the creator of a new system of dogma, but also the reformer of the religious consciousness of his age. He overthrew the old popular

<sup>1</sup> *Don. Pers.* 14.   <sup>2</sup> *Corr. et Gr.* 14, 15; *Praed. Sct.* 19.   <sup>3</sup> *Civ.* xxii. 2.

psychology and morality, and cast a new light upon the higher development of the human spirit by his remarkable power of making inner experiences the direct object of his observation. The intimate way in which for him morality and religion were bound together came upon his age like a revelation. To the ascetic morality prevalent in his day he gave a new meaning, by conceiving of it as a means through which man attains to love of God and the suppression of his selfish desires. He deepened the consciousness of sin and guilt, and in this respect he impressed upon the human mind a character which it has never since entirely lost. His was no superficial optimism, which simply ignored the existence of evil, but one based upon the idea of a new birth of the will, in which the radical evil of human nature is transcended. His greatest contribution consisted in converting the outer forms of religious worship into inner experience; and even where the authority of the Church was invoked, his object was to give to the individual that certainty which, as he believed, could be secured in no other way.

A man of such originality and independence as Augustine could not passively accept the traditional faith, but was compelled by his very nature to give it a new and higher form. Early Christian piety was a perpetual oscillation between hope and fear. The whole system of dogma started from the good which was believed to be obtained in Baptism. Fear of judgment led to fasts, alms-giving, and prayer. Men hesitated between confidence in their own power and hope in the inexhaustibility of the grace of Christ. There was a belief in free-will, but it did not overcome the terror and remorse arising from the consciousness of evil. Augustine, on the other hand, brought peace and rest into the soul through his conception of the relation

## 350 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of man to God. "Thou, O Lord, hast created us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it finds rest in Thee": this is the new note of Christian piety represented by Augustine. This state of feeling he reached by his study of Scripture, by his observation of human nature, and by his religious speculation. Sin is the sphere and the form of the inner life of every natural man. That the human race had experienced a fall from its original state, had been asserted in all theological systems from St. Paul to Origen; but Augustine was the first to regard this fall as the basis of all religious feeling and all theological thought. For him it was the most vital fact, which determined the life of the individual and of the whole race. All sin is sin against God, for there is only one permanent relation of a created Spirit—the relation to God. Sin is self-will, and therefore its form is that of desire and unrest. Thus fear is itself the experience of evil. Out of this unrest man can be raised only by union with God. There is no true life of the soul but life in God. And this life is possible for man only through Jesus Christ. Through him man may again come into community with God. This takes place through grace, which makes us willing, though unwilling, giving to us a new nature, and through love, which strengthens the weak spirit and fills it with the powers of goodness. Faith and love proceed from God, for they are the means by which the living God imparts Himself to His own. The peace of God is poured into the soul which has the living God as its friend. Thus it enters into the rest and peace of God, advancing from false freedom to true necessity, from fear to love; for "perfect love casteth out fear." Faith, humility, and love are the means by which the misery of sin is overcome. In this consciousness the Christian lives. He never ceases to feel the

pain which is the result of sin, but he never loses the consciousness of the blessedness resulting from union with God. Thus Augustine, in place of an uncertain and hesitating conception of sin, has put the knowledge of its power and its terror; in place of an uncertain conception of grace, he has put the knowledge of its omnipotence. This is the burden of his *Confessions*.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing was further from Augustine's mind than any intention of changing the traditional beliefs of the Church. That he actually effected such a change was due to his overmastering desire to realize for himself, and to live ever deeper in, the faith of the Church. For him the Church was the necessary means by which scepticism could be overcome. So far from denying the authority of the Church, he was the first to assign to it a definite place in his system. Thus he was able to give a deeper meaning to traditional beliefs without breaking with tradition. In his view, while the Church is the presupposition of the Christian life, it does not interfere with the religious life of the individual. Augustine's struggle with himself had convinced him of the sinfulness of human nature. When therefore he threw himself into the arms of the Church, he did so with the full conviction that its authority was necessary to prevent him from sinking into scepticism. The doubts which the doctrine of the Church excited could only be silenced by the Church. By means of allegorical interpretation, it is true, he found a way of meeting the attacks upon Scripture, but this allegorical interpretation itself was justified only by the Church. He openly proclaimed that he believed in many things solely on the authority of the Church. This conviction had an enormous influence upon

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, iii. 59-66.

## 352 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Western Catholicism; for now a great part of the responsibility, which had hitherto oppressed and crushed the individual, devolved upon the Church. Henceforth the Church coöperates in every act of faith. Thus the believer comes to adopt a different attitude towards dogma and Scripture. Augustine is the father of the doctrine of "implicit faith." This change in the attitude of the individual has by no means been productive solely of good. It opened up the way to all the evils which spring from belief in an external authority. In Augustine's own case its worst effects were avoided by his personal consciousness of God; and it was only when this living consciousness ceased to exist that belief in the authority of the Church showed its most baneful effects. We must also remember that belief in the authority of the Church was, for Augustine, at bottom belief that the Church was the medium by which the nature of God was revealed to man. From the *Confessions* of Augustine, as well as his other writings, it is evident that in his inmost soul he regards religion as consisting in communion with the living God, and therefore in a personal relation between the soul and God. The keynote of his *Confessions* is that God alone can give rest and peace to the soul. It was this conviction which constituted his greatness in the history of piety. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the dogmatic theory of his later days did not do full justice to his innermost convictions. The result was that Catholic Christianity did not escape from the danger of converting the personal relation between the individual and God into an external theory of the magical virtue of the sacraments.

It will not be possible, in the short time at my disposal, to attempt anything like an adequate estimate



## AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGY 353

of the theology of Augustine, and I must content myself with a few general remarks.

(1) Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity can only be understood if we bear in mind what he was seeking to avoid, and what he was labouring to express. What he was seeking to avoid was the Neoplatonic conception of God as absolutely inscrutable in His inner nature, and what he was seeking to express was that God is essentially self-generating, self-knowing, and self-manifesting. The Neoplatonists did, indeed, say that God produces a Son, who is the image of Himself, and they described this Son as an intelligence which is its own object; but, on the other hand, they regarded the distinction in intelligence of subject and object as a defect; thus virtually maintaining that God in Himself is Pure Being. Now, Augustine rightly holds that God is essentially self-knowing; in other words, that the distinction of subject and object, when subject and object are identical, is the highest form of being. Thus Augustine, in his doctrine of the Trinity, was intent upon maintaining that God must be conceived, not as pure being, but as the absolute identity of being and knowing. It was also Augustine's object to emphasize the truth that God, by His very nature, is Love. Hence he insists, not only that God duplicates Himself in His Son, but that the relation between Father and Son is that of Love. It is thus obvious that Augustine has expressed in his doctrine the fundamental idea of Christianity, that God is in His inner essence Love. But, while we must do full justice to the truth contained in Augustine's doctrine, it is impossible to admit that the form in which he states it is adequate. If in the Father memory—or what in the divine nature corresponds to memory—preponderates, in the

## 354 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Son intelligence, in the Holy Spirit love, we cannot consistently preserve the unity of God. The truth seems to be, that Augustine, though he names the unity, is unable to find a proper expression for it. When he is speaking of the human mind, he cannot get rid of the notion that, though the mind is one, there are in it distinct faculties,—memory, intelligence, and will. But a true psychology will not put these three modes of mind on the same level, but will regard them as different stages in the development of the one single self-conscious subject. Now, what in the human subject presents itself as successive stages in the development of the one subject, cannot apply without modification to the divine nature; for in the divine nature there can be no process from lower to higher. Hence the three persons of the Trinity must be viewed as three phases or elements in the conception of God, which may be distinguished by analysis, but which imply one another. God, the Father, must be regarded as an abstract conception of the infinite fulness of being which is involved in the divine nature; God, the Son, as an expression of the essential nature of God as self-objectifying; and God, the Spirit, as expressing the essential nature of God as a self-determinant and self-conscious Unity. But these logical distinctions do not imply that there are three distinct persons, if by this is meant that each is God: to say so is to divide up the divine nature in an illegitimate way: what is true is that God is essentially self-existent, self-manifesting, and self-knowing. In more popular language, we may express this by saying that God must be conceived as a Person, or, as I should prefer to say, as a Spirit; for spirit is that which is capable of manifesting the most extreme distinction without losing its essential

identity; nay, that which must manifest the most extreme distinction, while maintaining its unity. Nothing can be foreign to the divine nature, and therefore nothing can destroy its absolute self-identity.

(2) In his doctrine of the Trinity, Augustine conceives of God as absolutely complete in Himself, independently of His relation to the world; in his doctrine of the divine purpose, on the other hand, he maintains that whatever comes to pass has already existed in the divine mind from all eternity. Between these views, as we have already seen, there seems to be this fundamental discrepancy, that God in His own nature is self-complete, and therefore there is nothing beyond Himself to know, while yet He is affirmed to have in His mind a knowledge of all that has been, is, or will be in the world. Here, in fact, we come upon a fundamental difficulty, which presents itself in various forms in the theology of Augustine,—the difficulty of explaining how God can be absolutely self-complete apart from the world, while yet the world is in some way bound up with the knowledge and purpose of God. The difficulty presents itself here in the form that, as God's knowledge of Himself is distinguished from His knowledge of the world, the former is already complete without the latter; for God's knowledge of Himself is, and must be, absolutely complete knowledge, and therefore knowledge of the world would seem to be knowledge of what lies beyond the sum-total of reality: which is a manifest contradiction. It is obvious that the only way in which we can possibly escape from this contradiction is by holding that God's knowledge of Himself involves a knowledge of the world. What prevented Augustine from taking this view was no doubt his inability to see how it could be maintained

-- -- obviously the world, and another entirely depends on the doctrine attempt. On the one hand the world, as distinguished from the sum of being, differs from God in that it is a negation or privation. That the world can contain an element of God. And, if the world can only be a reality of the world, it cannot possess. Such a result, can only lead to the conclusion that has only an appearance and must be regarded as Spinoza held, who *specie aeternitatis*. consequence of Augustine's view that being is purely negative is that the world is which contains nothing.

completeness of the divine nature, the existence of the world becomes inexplicable. Augustine, indeed, tries to obviate this objection by saying that the creation of the world does not involve any change in the divine purpose. But, not to repeat the difficulty, which we have already found to beset Augustine's doctrine of the divine purpose, it is obvious that this reply does not meet the fundamental difficulty, that the world, to which is given a reality additional to the complete reality of God, must have some independence, unless it is to be resolved into the divine nature. It is thus evident that Augustine has attempted to reconcile two discrepant views. He is right in maintaining that all reality is involved in the divine nature, and he is also right in holding that the finite has in some sense a reality of its own; but he is unable to reconcile the two views with each other. To reconcile them, we must be prepared to admit that the reality of God is inconceivable apart from the reality of the world. Such a doctrine can be defended from attack, only if we can show that the world, when understood as it really is, has a reality not merely negative, but positive, while yet it has no reality apart from God. From this point of view the reality of the world is bound up with the reality of God: to know what the world is in its true nature is to know that it is a manifestation of God. In this way, and as I believe in this way only, can the dualism of God and the world be overcome.

Augustine's view of time and space is but another instance of the same conflict of opposite ideas. On the one hand, he regards time and space as having no meaning from the point of view of God; and, on the other hand, as having reality from the point of view of created things. But it is impossible to rest in this

## 358 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

compromise. If time and space are merely modes of finite reality, which have no meaning from the divine point of view, how can we avoid regarding them as illusions? Augustine has concealed this difficulty from himself, by assuming that the world has a kind of reality of its own. But, if God contemplates all things as apart from space and time, obviously space and time have for Him no reality; in other words, they can only be the imperfect modes in which a finite being like man is compelled to view things. Now, it must of course be admitted that time and space are not ultimate ways of conceiving reality; but it is one thing to admit this, and another, and a totally different thing, to say that they have no reality whatever. If we are able to say that God contemplates things from a higher point of view, it must be because we are ourselves able to do so, since what we cannot make intelligible to ourselves has for us no meaning. Nor does it seem hard to see that, in the very conception of God as unchangeable and eternal, we are already beyond the point of view of mere succession and co-existence. At the same time, no comprehension of the idea of God can destroy the aspect of reality in which it manifests succession and co-existence; therefore time and space cannot be mere illusions, due to the limited character of the human mind: they are determinations of reality itself.

(4) In his doctrine of sin Augustine seeks to avoid Manichaeism on the one hand, and Pelagianism on the other hand. In contrast to the former, he maintains that nothing can be evil by nature, because this would mean that creatures as they come from the hand of God are evil. The creature is finite, but not evil. In contrast to Pelagius, he holds that the first man was endowed with a good will, and that sin was due to his

refusal of the divine aid. Now, while we must admit that Augustine's doctrine shows a much clearer appreciation of the facts than either Manichaeism or Pelagianism, it can hardly be said that he has reached a self-consistent theory. To say that Adam had power to accept the divine aid, but no power to will the good without divine aid, only pushes the difficulty a stage further back. For, if we ask how he obtained power to will the acceptance of divine aid, the answer must be that he obtained it from God. But this means that Adam had no independent will, and was merely a medium of the divine will. On the other hand, Augustine holds that Adam could will the refusal of the divine aid. Hence we must suppose that he had power of himself to will evil, but had no power to will good. But, if so, it would seem that sin was absolutely inevitable, and as a consequence that moral responsibility is unmeaning. Augustine is so determined to avoid the objection that evil can be attributed to God, that he attributes to man the faculty of willing evil, while denying to him any faculty of willing good. But the one goes with the other : if man cannot will good, neither can he will evil ; and if the one comes from God, so also must the other. It thus seems to me, that the only escape from the difficulties of the Augustinian doctrine is to admit frankly that the power to will evil comes from God, not less than the power to will good ; in other words, that man, in his whole nature as a self-determining being, is dependent entirely upon God. If it is objected, that this is inconsistent with the conception of God as absolutely good, I should answer that the perfection of God, as Augustine himself admits, is not inconsistent with the existence of evil ; in other words, that, from the highest point of view, evil is a necessary element in the development of a

## 360 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

finite self-conscious being, who only becomes good by the exercise of his freedom. What from a narrow point of view is evil, must yet be the condition of the highest good.

Augustine's doctrine of sin rests upon the imperfect metaphysics which he borrowed from Neoplatonism. All that is positive in the finite being comes from God, what belongs to the creature as such being merely negative. Now, we have already seen that, when pushed to its logical consequences, this doctrine leads to the denial of all reality to the finite being. And when Augustine attempts to explain sin from the point of view of negation, he falls into a confusion of thought. Admitting that finitude is negation, it does not follow that sin is negation. The willing of evil is only the willing of negation in this sense, that it is willing that which is contrary to good ; but the negation of good is just as positive as the negation of evil, and indeed the one is the correlative of the other. To will evil is not merely to will the absence of good, but to will the presence of evil. What gives plausibility to Augustine's doctrine is, that to will evil is undoubtedly to will what is inconsistent with the higher nature of man ; that is, what is inconsistent with his true being, which consists in identity with the will of God. But we cannot oppose the good of man as such to his good as identical with the will of God, as if the former were merely negative : it is only negative in the sense that it is contrary to the true nature of man.

(5) The form in which Augustine has stated his doctrine of predestination is obviously defective. It assumes an arbitrary act of God, by which certain persons are elected to eternal salvation, others to eternal damnation. This is, of course, the counterpart of Augustine's view of sin and grace. Such a

conception of the divine plan of the world is manifestly untenable ; the destiny of man cannot be fixed by an arbitrary decree, but must be the result of his free self-determination. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the doctrine of predestination is of great value, so far as it is a protest against the superficial view, that freedom consists in a perfectly arbitrary choice. The world is not a mere chaos, where anything may occur : it is a rational whole, in which evil necessarily punishes itself ; that is, in which the very nature of God demands that actions contrary to the divine law shall have eternal consequences. This truth, however, is really the negation of the conception, that the destiny of man is fixed by an arbitrary decree. A man's actions are his own, and his destiny must be determined by them. Augustine is forced to admit that there are cases in which the attempt to save men from perdition would seem to be vain, if only we were omniscient. No better proof could be given of the fundamental defect of his own theory, which is at bottom a survival of that Manichaeism, from which he believed himself to be delivered, but which still exerted its fatal influence upon him, leading him to adopt the irrational doctrine that there are men who have been put beyond the pale of God's universe, and put beyond it by a purely arbitrary decree.

## **LECTURE FOURTEENTH**

### **MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY**

WE have seen how Christianity was threatened in its main principle by the divisive categories of Greek thought, and only escaped "so as by fire." In the age of Thomas Aquinas that danger was over, but the very triumph of the Church was a source of unexpected peril. In Augustine it had found a man of speculative genius, full of life and energy, employing his great powers in its service, but in virtue of his originality transforming the doctrines he supposed himself to be accepting in implicit faith, and determining the course of religious speculation for centuries; in Thomas Aquinas it is represented by a great systematizer, naturally of a calm and reflective disposition, whose only originality consists in the faculty of clear, logical arrangement of traditional ideas and in the ingenuity with which he defends the doctrines of the Church by subtle distinctions that leave their substance unchanged. The great germinative ideas of Augustine were left undeveloped through the whole of the Middle Ages, and it is only when we reach the beginning of the modern world in Luther and Descartes that we find this side of his activity developed. This arrest of original speculation is due in large measure to the

peculiar position of the Church as the custodian of the civilization of the old world, as well as of the new spiritual power introduced by Christianity. With the innrush of the Barbarians into the Roman Empire, the civilization of the old world would have been crushed had it not been preserved by the Church. But the inevitable result was the destruction of the free spirit of antiquity. The Barbarians were babes in thought, and could only accept the teaching of the Church in implicit faith. They were capable of feeling the influence of the new gospel of self-sacrifice, but they were too undeveloped in reflective power to criticise the theology which claimed to formulate it. No doubt this guarded the youthful mind of these nations from aberrations destructive of the essence of Christianity, but the higher intellectual life was stifled, and could only be restored after long toil and conflict. The strength of the Church lay in its powerful organization and its completed system of doctrine. Hence the Middle Ages subordinated knowledge to faith, seeing in science only a means of preserving intact the unity of doctrine. Even this guarded exercise of reflection, however, contained in it the germ of that freer movement which awoke in the modern world with the Renaissance and the Reformation; and therefore Scholasticism was not merely the apologist for dogma, but an unconscious preparation for a more independent movement of thought.

Medieval philosophy moved within the lines of the Augustinian theology, but with that theology was combined as an instrument the study of Aristotelian logic, or rather of that logic regarded as a purely formal discipline. In the first centuries of the Middle Ages only two of the logical treatises of Aristotle were read—the *De Categoriis* and the *De Interpretatione*, and these

## 364 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

only in a Latin translation with the introduction of Porphyry. The result was that an enormous industry was expended in learning and practising the schematism of formal logic. The dogmas of the Church were regarded as infallible, and the main activity of thought was concentrated on the attempt to reduce them to syllogistic form. There was one problem, however, which naturally arose from the consideration of the forms of thought, and which was continually discussed, especially in the first period of the Middle Ages, the problem of the nature of universal ideas. Have these ideas *realities* corresponding to them, or are they merely *names* for collections of individuals, or are they but *conceptions* in the mind? An affirmative answer to each of these questions gave the three theories of *Realism*, *Nominalism*, and *Conceptualism*.

Meanwhile this subtle dialectical disputation met with opposition, partly from those who had received an impulse to scientific studies from the Arabians, and still more from simple pious minds, who saw in dialectic a weapon for obscuring the simple Christian faith and casting doubt upon the doctrines of the Church.

Nothing could at first sight seem more barren than the endless controversy about the nature of universals. We may, however, understand how it came to exercise so great a fascination over men's minds, if we turn for a moment to one of its applications. Suppose the Realists to be right; suppose, that is, that the reality of anything is proportional to its generality; and what is the logical consequence of this view when applied to determine the nature of God? If we arrange a number of logical species under a supreme genus, obviously this genus will be the most general of all, viz. pure Being. Now, if pure Being is the

highest reality, the definition of God as the highest Being will be that of a Being of whom nothing can be said but that He, or It, is. Such a result naturally led to a revolt against Realism. But the counter-theory of Nominalism is equally defective on the other side. If universals are merely names, all realities must be particular, and thus the idea of God can only be a name for the collection of particular things. If, therefore, Realism leads to a pantheistic conception of God, Nominalism is logically atheistic. Nor is Conceptualism a satisfactory solution of the problem; for, if universals are merely conceptions in our minds, the conception of God cannot be a real comprehension of God, but only of God as our understanding conceives Him to be.

With the second period of the Middle Ages, the controversy about universals largely lost its interest, partly because the more concrete writings of Aristotle came to be known. This is the period of which Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was the spokesman. His philosophy and theology are the explicit formulation of the whole later medieval view of life, expressing, as they do, in the form of a reasoned system, its ascetic piety, its mysticism and its belief in the absolute sovereignty of the Church in all matters of faith and practice. At the end of the tenth century there was a powerful revival of religious and ecclesiastical life, which grew in strength and influence and reached its culmination in the thirteenth century. The monastery of Clugny, which was founded in the tenth century, was at first supported by princes, bishops, and above all by the Emperor, until it was turned by Hildebrand (1015-1085) against all three. Christianity came to be identified with the monastic conception of life; the result being that the clergy

## 366 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

were maintained to be supreme over the whole of the laity, while the national churches lost their independence and were forced to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. According to the monastic ideal, the present life must be entirely devoted to a preparation for the life to come. This naturally led to the view that all secular powers must be under control of the Church, since otherwise the Gospel would be captured by hostile powers. Hence all national forms of life must be subject to the divine ends of the Church; which meant that they must be subject to the Pope, as the representative of Christ. In the beginning of the thirteenth century the Church was entirely victorious. As has been said, the age bore, in its culture, "the pained look of world-renunciation on the one hand, and the look of strong character suggesting world-conquest on the other."

This was the conception of life which Thomas sought to commend to his age. For this end he employed all the learning of his time, which had been enriched by contact with Palestine, Constantinople and Spain, and above all, by the direct study of the logic, physics, ethics and politics of Aristotle; but the ideal which governed his thoughts, and determined the form of his theology, was the triumphant ideal of the universal sovereignty of the Church. Thomas did not create the papal theory, but he was the first to give it a systematic and reasoned basis. That theory involved two great equations: the hierarchy is the Church, and the Church is the Pope. By the first equation it was held that the Christianity of the laity is dependent on the mediation of the priests, who alone can perform ecclesiastical acts, and whose sacramental and judicial powers are independent of their personal character. By the second equation, the Church, as

possessing both temporal and spiritual power, must have a monarchical constitution, and be represented by the successor of Peter, the Roman Bishop. This is the view in support of which Thomas employs all his dialectical skill. It was a view that had practically been accepted since the days of Hildebrand, but, until Thomas wrote his *Summa*, its support was sought in external historic testimonies, most of them audacious forgeries; it was left for him to develop the hierarchical and papal theory in connection with a bold theory of the State, and thus, for the first time, to make it part of a comprehensive theology.

Now, if the absolute sovereignty of the Church is to be vindicated, not only the old dogmas, but the entire department of ecclesiastical practice, must be regarded as of divine origin; and this, from the scholastic point of view, means that both dogma and practice must be shown to harmonize with reason, even when they transcend its unaided powers. We thus find in Thomas an absolute faith in authority, combined with the demand that theology should be a scientific system. This attempt to unite faith and reason is not peculiar to him; what is peculiar is that—unlike Anselm, for instance—he regards authority and reason as independent sources of knowledge, neither of which can be reduced to the other. Thus, a broad distinction is drawn between natural theology as based upon reason, and positive theology, the basis of which is revelation. The aim of Thomas, therefore, was to construct a system of theology that should be employed in the service of the Church. But, since the knowledge of Church doctrine and Church practice is, at the same time, the knowledge of God, theology is also conceived as a means of salvation, and thus it at once brings the

## 368 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

individual into subjection to the Church and lifts him into free communion with God. In constructing this system Thomas started from the Augustinian doctrines of God, predestination, sin and grace; the material thus supplied to him, he proceeded to mould into a system by a comprehensive use of the Aristotelian philosophy; and the highest ecclesiastical claims he sought to vindicate by a general theory of the State, adapted from Aristotle. It is to this system, with its complex and discordant elements, that we must now give our attention.

Through the whole of the Thomistic theology there runs the fundamental contrast of Reason and Revelation. The opposition, between truths which can be discovered by the exercise of reason, and truths which transcend reason, is one from which no medieval thinker could liberate himself, and hence we find it made the basis of the Thomistic philosophy. But, while the antithesis is accepted, the demand for intellectual clearness, which was the main impulse to its construction, inevitably led to the attempt to show that there can be no disharmony between the two kinds of truth. From the point of view of God there can be only one truth, and therefore the distinction between the truths of reason and the truths of revelation arises from the limitation of our intelligence, not from any discrepancy between the truths themselves. There are, then, truths which come to us from revelation, and from revelation alone. These human reason could never discover, nor even, when they are revealed, can we perfectly comprehend their infinite depth. Such truths are the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the creation of the world in time. And, obviously, nothing less could be held by a defender of the Church; for, if it is once admitted

that all truth must be established by the normal exercise of reason, the whole theory of a special divine revelation disappears, and along with it the infallibility of the articles of faith and the claim of the Church to exercise sovereignty over all nations and individuals.

So far as the special "mysteries" of Christianity are concerned, Thomas maintained the absolute independence of truths of reason, and truths of revelation. No human reason could ever have reached the truths of revelation by inferences from facts. But, since reason is implanted in us by God, it has its own special function and its own rights. Nor is reason so absolutely limited that it is confined within the boundaries of the sensible world: it is capable of rising, from the things that have been made, to their Author, God. It is true that reason could never have discovered the inner nature of God; that is known to us only by revelation; but it is capable of demonstrating that God is, and that He is one. There is, therefore, a kind of truth, which is *common* to reason and revelation. But this gives rise to a problem which demands solution. Why should God reveal to us truths that we are capable of discovering - for ourselves? For various reasons, answers Thomas, but chiefly because such truths as the existence and nature of God, while they are of supreme importance, are so difficult to discover, and so apt to be obscured by error, that it was necessary that they should be placed in the clear light of revelation. So far as these truths are concerned, then, their absolute guarantee is revelation, but, as they may also be proved by reason, they must be admitted, even by those who reject revelation. Thus a demonstration of them is a preparation for the reception of

## 370 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

revelation, and therefore philosophy is the "handmaid of theology."<sup>1</sup>

Corresponding to the distinction between truths of reason and truths of revelation, is the distinction between Knowledge and Faith. Thomas, indeed, is here placed in a peculiar difficulty. When we look at Knowledge and Faith from the point of view of the human subject, we must put Knowledge above Faith. Knowledge consists in the direct or indirect comprehension of a real object; whereas Faith is merely the subjective certainty of a truth, without insight into the reason why it is true. From this point of view, therefore, Knowledge is higher than Faith: in Aristotelian language, it is the apprehension, not merely of the "fact" ( $\delta\tau\iota$ ), but of the "reason why" ( $\delta\iota\omega\tau\iota$ ). Now, if this distinction is applied to the sphere of divine things, it is obvious that the knowledge obtained by the exercise of reason must be higher than faith in the truths of revelation. Such a doctrine no defender of the Church could possibly accept; and therefore Thomas maintains that, when we consider Faith and Knowledge by reference to the objects with which they deal, the former is higher than the latter. The object of Christian Faith is either God Himself, or the world in its relation to God; and the sole source of this Faith is the revelation of Himself given to us by God, who is absolutely truthful. Now, the certainty which is based upon the absolute truthfulness of God is higher than can possibly proceed from the insight of reason; for reason is prone to err, while revelation is infallible. When, therefore, we consider the sources of Faith and Knowledge, we must admit that Faith is higher than Knowledge. Thomas is thus led to hold that

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, i. 3-9.

Faith and Knowledge are mutually exclusive. That which we know, since it is immediately present, cannot be an object of Faith. When reason is in harmony with the object, we have Knowledge; but Faith is belief in an object that is not, and cannot be, present in itself, and therefore it involves a surrender of the will in the absence of Knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

So far as the special truths of Christianity are concerned, there is no difficulty in preserving the distinction between Faith and Knowledge. We have faith in the doctrine of the Trinity or the Incarnation, not because we can comprehend these "mysteries," but because we surrender our wills to God, "believing where we cannot prove." But what are we to say of those truths which are *common* to reason and revelation? Can we maintain that the existence of God is an object of Faith, and therefore exclusive of Knowledge, while admitting that we have here a truth which is reached by the normal exercise of reason, and is therefore an object of Knowledge? The faculty of subtle distinction, which is characteristic of the scholastic philosopher, enables Thomas to give a plausible solution of the difficulty. In the first place, we have to remember that there are many who have no demonstrative knowledge of the truths which are common to reason and revelation. Now, these truths are the presuppositions of faith, the *Praeambula fidei*, and therefore they are an object of faith, and not of knowledge, for those who cannot establish them by reason. It is, therefore, man's duty to believe in these truths, quite independently of his ability to prove them by reason. But, secondly, this act of faith is demanded even of those who have knowledge. The human mind in its weakness is prone to doubt and

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 99, Art. 1; ii. Q. 1, Art. 1, 4, 8.

## 372 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

error, and therefore, quite irrespective of demonstration, we must surrender our wills to the revelation of these truths. Thus, even when we have satisfied our reason of the truths of God's existence and unity, Faith in this truth must subsist side by side with, and independently of, Knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

If Faith, as Thomas holds, is sufficient evidence not only of the "mysteries" of Christianity, but even of those truths which can be demonstrated by reason, it will naturally be objected that the work of reason is superfluous. Why should we laboriously seek to demonstrate the existence and unity of God, if this truth is not only revealed to us, but must in the end be accepted, independently of the evidence of reason? This objection also Thomas has anticipated. His answer is, that while the truths common to reason and revelation must be accepted solely on the authority of God, it lessens the merit of faith, and ultimately leads to its destruction, if we resist the evidence of reason. Moreover, Knowledge, so far from lessening the value of Faith, increases it; for he who humbly accepts a truth because it is revealed by God, and then goes on to adduce rational grounds for it, shows that he loves the truth, and this love of truth increases the merit of faith.<sup>2</sup>

As reason and revelation, knowledge and faith, are two independent sources of truth, there must be two independent sciences of divine things. The science of reason is Philosophy, the science of revelation is Theology. The former rests upon those principles which we come to know by the natural light of reason: the latter consists of the principles of revelation, which Thomas identifies with the dogmas of the Church, as revealed in the higher light of faith.

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, ii. Q. 1, Art. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa*, ii. Q. 2, Art. 9, 10.

No doubt there are truths which are common to philosophy and theology, but the attitude of the two sciences towards them is different, and therefore each constitutes an independent science. For philosophy these truths are considered as demonstrated by reason, for theology they are revelations of God. While both philosophy and theology have a practical as well as a theoretical part, theology is pre-eminently a speculative science, since its main interest is in the divine nature, human actions being considered only from the point of view of that vision of God which is the condition of eternal happiness. Moreover, though both sciences deal with created things, philosophy investigates their essential properties and relations, while theology considers them only as created by God and subject to His will. Their method is, therefore, entirely different; for, whereas philosophy ascends to God from the essential properties and laws of created things, theology, starting from the idea of God and His attributes, descends to created things, in order to determine their relation to God, so far as it can be learned from revelation.<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy of Thomas is an attempt to explain the various orders of existence by a transformation of the Aristotelian doctrine of *forms* and their relation to *matter*. There are immaterial or spiritual beings which, as entirely independent of matter, are pure forms; while, on the other hand, there are also immaterial beings who realize themselves only in union with matter. Now, the human soul, which is the lowest of the pure intelligences, is a *forma separata*, i.e. it is, in its essential nature, independent of the body, and on this depends its immortality. But, on the other hand, it is also the form of the body, and as such

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 1, Art. 4; *Contra Gentiles*, ii. 4.

## 374 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

it is the highest of those forms which realize themselves in matter. Nevertheless, in man as he actually exists, these two sides, the spiritual and the natural, are bound together in an absolute substantial unity. Man, then, in virtue of the union in him of a two-fold nature, is the link between the natural and supernatural. There is an ascending scale of being from the lowest inorganic beings, through the plant and the animal, to man, and from the human soul, in uninterrupted continuity through the various hierarchies of angels, who are pure intelligences not inherent in matter at all, to God the Absolute Form or Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

In his theory of knowledge, Thomas makes the direct object a copy of the external thing, which arises from the co-operation of the soul and the external thing. It is this copy which is apprehended by the soul. In his view of the powers of the soul Thomas follows Aristotle in regarding the intellect as higher in dignity than the will. The problem, as first raised, is whether determinations of the will depend upon ideas of the intellect, or ideas of the intellect upon determinations of the will. In particular cases Thomas admits that the will has an influence upon the affirmation or denial of ideas. This is true in the case of belief. But in general he maintains that the will is determined by knowledge of the good. For it is the intellect, which, in all cases, discerns what is good. The will always strives after what is known to be good, and is therefore dependent upon the intellect. Hence, freedom presupposes intelligence. It is true that freedom of choice implies the determination of the will, but the latter would be impossible if the understanding did not present various possibilities as means of realizing the end which it has set up. This

<sup>1</sup> *De Nat. Mat.* 3; *Summa*, i. Q. 66, Art. 2.

principle Thomas also applies to the relation between the divine intellect and will : God creates only what in His wisdom He knows to be good ; the ideal content of His intellect is Himself, and this is the object of will. Thus the divine will is bound to the divine wisdom, which is superior to it.<sup>1</sup>

In his ethics Thomas naturally maintains that, while the moral law is the command of God, it is commanded because it is good, and not good because it is commanded. As God only commands what is recognized as good by His wisdom, goodness is the necessary consequence and manifestation of the divine wisdom.

The theology of Thomas, with which we have now to deal, follows the order of the articles of faith, and therefore begins with the idea of God, the fundamental and cardinal article.

The highest way in which God can be apprehended is by intuition (*visio intuitiva*) ; the lowest is knowledge by means of the natural reason ; and standing between them is faith. In its conception of intuition, or the direct vision of God, the mystical side of the Thomistic doctrine is especially prominent. The intuitive apprehension of God is that direct vision of the divine essence, which transcends not only the highest reach of reason, but is superior even to faith. So to know God, is to know Him as He knows Himself. For God is conceived by Thomas, not only as the Absolute Substance, but, after the manner of Aristotle, as the pure self-consciousness (*νόησις νοήσεως*) or pure actuality, in which thought and being are absolutely identical. To such a vision of God it is impossible that any created being should attain, by even the highest exercise of his reason. Only if man were a

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, i. 65, 77 ; iii. 26 ; *Summa*, i. 2, Q. 3, Art. 4, 5.

## 376 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

pure intelligence, could he, by the use of his natural powers, have a direct vision of God ; so long as he is a being in whom soul and body are united, his intelligence is limited by the sensuous forms which supply the material with which thought must operate. Accordingly, man can only participate in the intuitive knowledge of God in a supernatural way ; in other words, God must so unite Himself with the human faculty of knowledge, that man may attain to a direct vision of the essence of God. Hence the necessity of supernatural illumination (*lumen gloriae*). But this supernatural illumination is not fitted for the present life, in which the soul is united with the body, but is mainly reserved for the life beyond ; and, therefore, it is only by the extraordinary influence of divine grace, that the human spirit can, in rare moments, experience the vision of God.<sup>1</sup>

At the other extreme from this intuitive knowledge of God stands that knowledge which is possible by the exercise of reason. By slow and tentative steps reason advances, from the knowledge of sensible things, to a knowledge of their first cause. The knowledge obtained in this way is neither that direct contemplation of the divine essence which is characteristic of intuition, nor can it ever be a complete knowledge of the divine nature. Yet, incomplete and fragmentary as it is, it is a true knowledge of God, worthy of the highest efforts of the human mind. It enables us to know that God is, that He transcends all created things, and that He is the first and highest cause of all things.<sup>2</sup>

Between the intuitive and the natural knowledge of God stands faith, which agrees with natural knowledge in being indirect, but is superior to it, because clearer

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 12, Art. 2, 4, 5, II.

<sup>2</sup> *In L. Boeth. de Trin.* Q. 1, Art. 2; Q. 6, Art. 3; *Summa*, i. Q. 12, Art. 12.

and more complete, and also because the truths of revelation are higher than those of creation, and contain such mysteries as those of the Trinity, which lie beyond the range of human reason.<sup>1</sup>

Now, the existence of God is a truth of reason as well as of revelation. If it is objected that no proof of the being of God is possible, because any such proof must be deduced from the essential nature of God, which lies beyond the range of our knowledge, the answer is that, though we cannot have a knowledge of the nature of God as He is for Himself, this does not hinder us from reasoning to the existence of God as the first cause of all created things. Thomas, however, refuses to admit the validity of the so-called Ontological Proof of Anselm. If, indeed, we had a direct knowledge of the divine essence, we could deduce from it the existence of God; but we have in this life no such knowledge; and therefore, from the fact that we have the *idea* of God as a Being than whom no higher can be conceived, it does not follow that such a Being actually exists. The proofs on which Thomas relies are, therefore, what Kant calls the cosmological and physico-theological. He first reasons from the fact of motion to the necessity of a first mover. Whatever we experience as moving, is set in motion by something other than itself. Hence we must either have an infinite series of moving causes, or there must be a first mover, which is not itself moved, but is the cause of motion in everything else. The former supposition is absurd, because, if there were no first mover, there would be no motion whatever. The other alternative must therefore be accepted. Hence, there must necessarily be a first mover, whom we call God. The same conclusion follows from the efficient causes which

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 12, Art. 13.

## 378 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

we observe in the world; for we must either admit a first cause, or accept the self-contradictory alternative of an infinite series of causes. The third argument is based on the contingency of all the objects that we observe in the world. That which is contingent may or may not exist, and therefore must at one time have been non-existent. But all contingent things must have come into being, and must therefore have been brought into existence by some cause which cannot itself be contingent, but must be necessary, and must have the ground of its necessity in itself. Thus it is proved that there must be a self-existent Being, whom we call God. Similarly, Thomas reasons from the various degrees of perfection observed in created things to the existence of an absolutely perfect Being, containing all the perfections found in the world. He also employs the Physico-theological or Design argument, which, as he believes, proves the existence of an intelligent cause.<sup>1</sup>

The proofs advanced by Thomas establish, as he believes, the existence of God as the first mover and the highest cause of all things, who is necessary, absolutely perfect and intelligent. Thus by a process of demonstration the existence and attributes of God have been proved. But reason can go no further. The Christian conception of God as "one in three persons" cannot be established by ratiocination, because it expresses the inner essence of the divine nature, into which man in this life even when under supernatural influence can only catch a fitful glimpse. The doctrine of the Trinity is entirely a truth of revelation, and is therefore indemonstrable. Reason infers the existence of God from His works; but, as these are the product,

<sup>1</sup> *De Verit.* Q. 10, Art. 12; *Contra Gent.* i. 11-13; *Summa*, i. Q. 2, Art. 1, 3.

not of any one of the three divine Persons, but of the Triune God, there is nothing in the visible world which reveals the inner essence of the divine nature.<sup>1</sup> What place, then, is left for reason in connection with this "mystery"? Thomas answers, that though it is indemonstrable, there are in the finite world, and especially in the rational creature, traces of the divine nature. Hence, he endeavours to make the doctrine of the Trinity more intelligible by means of analogies. Like Augustine, Thomas reduces the Persons of the Trinity to a refined Modalism, but, taught by the controversies that had been waged over the doctrine by his predecessors, he endeavours to avoid attack by even more subtle distinctions than those drawn by his great model.<sup>1</sup>

The "procession" of Persons in the divine Unity can only be conceived after the analogy of spiritual beings. The activity of thought is purely "immanent," and yet knowledge is so far "emanant" that, emerging from the depths of the intelligence, it projects an ideal image of itself. Following this analogy, we must distinguish a twofold "procession" in God, corresponding to the distinction of will and knowledge. In knowing Himself there proceeds from God the adequate thought of Himself, the divine Word; in willing Himself there is a procession of Himself as the object of love, the Holy Spirit. In all created things, but especially in man, we find traces of the divine Trinity. As a limited substance modified in a certain way the creature derives its being from another, and thus points to the Father; as endowed with a determinate form in which a determinate thought is revealed, it points to the divine Word, which is the ideal pattern of all things; and as ordained to a determinate end, which constitutes the good corresponding to its nature,

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 32, Art. 1.

## 380 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

it points to the Holy Spirit. Man, on the other hand, not only exhibits traces of the divine nature, but "is made in the image of God." As in God there are two "processions" corresponding to intelligence and will, so the human spirit is a unity of knowledge and love. In knowledge there is an object or inner "word," in will this "word" becomes an object of love. But man is only an "image" of God; for whereas God knows and loves Himself, man must know and love God, and only so can he truly love himself.<sup>1</sup>

After thus endeavouring to show that the doctrine of the Trinity, though it cannot be adequately comprehended by our finite intelligence, may yet be figured after the analogy of the human spirit, Thomas has next to explain the relation of God to the world. The doctrine of the eternity of the world he, like his predecessors, absolutely denies, maintaining the creation out of nothing as an article of faith. But, while he holds that reason can demonstrate the fact of creation, Thomas refuses to admit that it can demonstrate that the world must have had beginning *in time*. "It is to be asserted," he says, "that the world's not having always existed is held by faith alone and cannot be proved demonstratively; as was asserted also regarding the mystery of the Trinity . . . That the world had a beginning is credible, but it is not a matter of demonstration or knowledge. And it is useful to consider this, in case perhaps some one, presuming to demonstrate what is of faith, should adduce reasons that are not necessary, thus giving occasion for ridicule to infidels, who might think that on the ground of such reasons we believe what is of faith."<sup>2</sup> Thomas, however, so far forgets his own warning, that he goes on

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 27, Art. 1-4; Q. 93, Art. 4-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa*, i. Q. 46, Art. 2.

to give a "probable" proof that the world had a beginning in time. The creation of the world cannot be regarded as necessary, for God was under no necessity to create it. Hence, the fact that He voluntarily brought it into existence best harmonizes with the doctrine that it had a beginning in time. In other words, the creation of the world in time seems best to agree with the doctrine of the absolute freedom of God. The purpose of the creation of the world, as all the schoolmen held, is to manifest the love of God, which seeks to communicate itself to other beings. For Thomas, indeed, the creation of the world is merely a contingent means whereby God fulfils His personal end; but, on the other hand, he represents this personal end as the supreme thought: "*divina bonitas est finis rerum omnium*"<sup>1</sup> (the divine love is the end of all things). If so, it is hard to see how the personal end of God can be separated from the existence of the creature.

The question of divine providence, which was first definitely raised by Origen, and had been vigorously discussed from the time of Anselm and Abelard, is treated with great fulness. Thomas finds the highest ground for the multiplicity and variety of things in God Himself. Every efficient cause seeks to produce an effect as like itself as the matter employed will allow. Hence God must intend to produce the most perfect image of Himself, so far as His likeness can be imparted to created things. Now, a multiplicity and variety of things, combined in a definite order with one another, is a higher good than could be secured by the existence of a number of individual things, identical in nature, and unrelated to one another. Moreover, the world must contain spiritual

<sup>1</sup> *Sententia*, i. Q. 44, Art. 4.

## 382 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

beings, for only these manifest the spiritual nature of God. Now, if all created things, including man, derive their whole nature from God, must we not hold that all activity in the region of created things is the immediate and exclusive activity of God? No, answers Thomas: if God has made all things like Himself, they must, like Him, be endowed with self-activity. The distinction between God and the creature is that, whereas the creative essence is self-active because of the power inseparable from it, the power of the creature is derived from God. This principle, which is perfectly general, enables us to see that the human will is essentially free though derived from God.<sup>1</sup>

The providence of God is not merely general, but extends to the minutest detail. If God does not care for every one of His creatures, it must be because He has not the will to do so, since His power is infinite. But God's goodness extends to all, and therefore He wills the good of all. We must, however, draw a distinction. The order of the world is due to the combination of intelligence and will, but the particular form in which this order is realized is not incompatible with the self-activity of the parts, and with the subordination of these parts in the attainment of the final cause, the good of the whole. Hence, spiritual beings, which stand nearest to God, are the main instruments for the realization of the plan of divine providence, and to them all other beings must be subordinate. And since the will must be illuminated by the understanding, it is not incompatible with the freedom of man that some should govern and others be governed. Were the

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Gent.* i. 44; ii. 45-6; iii. 22, 64-70, 80, 89, 97, 148; *Summa*, i. Q. 108, Art. 1-6.

less intelligent to rule the more intelligent, the divine order could not be realized.<sup>1</sup>

Since God is absolutely good, He must do all for the best. But Thomas refuses to admit that the infinite goodness of God demands the creation of an absolutely perfect world. For, as God's power is infinite, He must be capable of creating other worlds than this. When, therefore, it is said that the world is ordered in the best and most perfect way, this must be understood to mean only a relative perfection. The world as it exists perfectly attains the end for which it was created, but God might have created a more perfect world, both as regards the character of the parts and the order of the whole. It is nevertheless true that the world has been formed in the best and most perfect way. But, if so, what are we to say of evil? Can we reconcile divine providence with the evil in the world and with the freedom of will from which evil springs? To these questions Thomas gives an affirmative answer. In an ordered world, there must be gradations of goodness, corresponding to the variety and difference of things. Hence, there must be beings who can never fall from goodness, and next to them beings who are capable of falling from goodness. Now, beings that are capable of falling from goodness often actually do so, and this is evil. The perfection of creation therefore involves at once the possibility and the reality of evil. The perfection of the whole is compatible with the imperfections of the parts, if thereby the perfection of the whole is increased. Moreover, much good would be eliminated from the world if there were no evil in it, giving room for the display of patience under persecution and suffering, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Gent.* iii. 75-8, 81.

## 384 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

other spiritual qualities. Nor is divine providence incompatible with human freedom; on the contrary, with the removal of freedom the world would cease to be perfectly ordered, since without freedom virtue, justice and foresight in action are inconceivable.<sup>1</sup>

Now, faith is concerned on the one hand, with the divinity of the Trinity, and on the other hand, with the humanity of Christ. The Apostle tells us that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and we must therefore ask how man has fallen into sin, in order to understand how he may be delivered from sin through the humanity of Christ. As originally created by God, the body of man was entirely subject to the soul, and the lower faculties of the soul to the higher, while his reason was subject to God. Now, since the body was subject to the soul, no bodily passion could be hostile to the rule of the soul; hence man was not subject to death or disease. As the faculties of the soul were under the rule of reason, man was in a state of perfect peace and harmony, being free from all disturbance of unregulated passion. And as his will was subject to God, man referred all things to God as the ultimate end, and in this consisted his righteousness and innocence. This subordination of all things to God was the cause of the harmony between reason and passion, soul and body. For, if we consider the various parts of which the body is composed, we see that there is nothing in the nature of the body itself to exclude its dissolution or to prevent the operation of passions hostile to life. Similarly, it is not involved in the nature of the soul that the sensuous powers should be subject to reason, for these are naturally excited by the love of pleasure, which is in many ways contrary to the commands of

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Gent.* i. 66; iii. 69-73, 99.

reason. It was therefore due to a supreme power, viz. God, that the rational soul was so conjoined to the body, that reason was superior to sense. If, therefore, reason was to rule the lower powers, it must be subject to God. Man, then, in his original state was so formed, that so long as his reason was in submission to God, his body would be subject to the soul, and the sensuous desires to reason. While this subordination continued he could suffer neither death nor pain. On the other hand he was capable of sin, because his will was not yet conformed to the ultimate end, and therefore death and pain were possible. The distinction between the immortality and freedom from pain of the first man thus differs from that of the saints after the resurrection, who can never suffer death or pain, because their will is absolutely submissive to God. Now, in order that man might be habituated to submit his will to God, he was commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—not that the eating of it was in itself evil, but that in this unimportant matter man might obey solely because God had commanded. The devil, who had already sinned, seeing that man might gain eternal happiness, sought to seduce him from the path of righteousness, and made his attack upon the weaker sex, in whom the light of wisdom was less strong; and, to prevail the more readily, he promised what man naturally desired, the removal of ignorance, higher dignity and perfect knowledge. The result of man's transgression of the divine command was that the entire equilibrium of his original state was destroyed. (1) The subjection of sense to reason was destroyed, and there arose in man the excitations of lust, anger and other inordinate passions. This is the conflict of flesh and spirit to

## 386 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

which the Apostle (Gal. v. 17) refers. (2) As the soul was now unable to keep the body under its control, man became subject to pain and death, which were no longer possibilities but necessities. (3) Other defects followed. Since the lower desires obtained the mastery, while the light of wisdom diminished, by which the will was illuminated so long as it was subject to God, man's affections were subject to sensible things, and he fell into many sins. He sought aid from unclean spirits, and thus arose idolatry; the more corrupt he became, the further he receded from the knowledge and desire of spiritual things.<sup>1</sup>

The sin of the first man involved all his posterity in these consequences. Nor is this contrary to justice, for it involves only the withdrawal of that righteousness which was a gift to Adam of God's free grace. The difficulty may be raised, however, whether the want of original righteousness in Adam's descendants is to be imputed to them as *guilt*. How can there be guilt without personal transgression? The question may be solved by distinguishing between person (*persona*) and nature (*natura*). Just as in one "person" there are many members, so there are in the same "nature" many persons. And as all men are of the same "nature," the human race may be regarded as a single man, as Porphyry says. In the case of the individual man, though the various members are the instruments of sin, it is the *will* to which we attribute the sin; so in the single man constituting the human species, the want of original righteousness is a sin, not of the individual man as such, but of human nature in so far as it flows from the will of the father of the human race. While,

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Theologiae*, 185-6, 188-9, 192-4.

therefore, the sins actually committed by the individual directly affect him in *person*, original sin only affects his *nature*. For, the first parent by his sin infected the *nature* of man, and thus indirectly the *person* of his posterity, who receive this corrupt nature from him. It must not be supposed, however, that all the sins of Adam or of other men are transmitted to posterity. The first sin of Adam deprived man once for all of the gift of original righteousness, and no subsequent sin can make the loss more complete, but only takes away or decreases some particular or personal good. Now, man does not generate an individual like himself in *person*, but only in *nature*; and hence what is transmitted from father to son is not sin which affects the *person*, but only that first sin which has corrupted the *nature* of man. And as the *personal sins* of Adam are not transmitted to his posterity, so neither can posterity benefit from his repentance or any other merit attaching to him as an individual; for no act of an individual can in any way affect the total nature of the species. Hence the individual merit of Adam or of any mere man cannot possibly restore /the whole nature of man to its original state. As original righteousness was a free gift of God, much more must its restoration be due to divine providence.<sup>1</sup>

Man, then, can only attain to perfect happiness by the removal of the corruption produced by the sin of Adam. And this can be accomplished only by God, and indeed by God becoming man. In his Christology, in fact, Thomas gives such predominance to the divine factor that the human becomes something passive and accidental. He was the first to give

<sup>1</sup> *Com. Theor.* 195-8.

## 388 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

a complete doctrine of redemption. He denied, however, that the death of Christ was necessary, maintaining that God could have remitted sin in the exercise of His free will. The reason he assigns for the death of Christ is that it was the "most fitting," because more and greater things are imparted to us in this way than if we were redeemed solely by the will of God. He argues, in the first place, that the suffering and death of Christ were the most fitting means of redemption. The suffering endured by Christ, including His own pain and the pain of sympathy for our sin, is represented as the sum total of all conceivable suffering. Here two distinct elements are implied: (1) Christ as *man* is the redeemer, because, as Augustine held, His suffering brings God's love home to our hearts and thus stirs in us a responsive love; (2) because the death of Christ was the most fitting means of winning for men justifying grace (*gratia justificans*) and the glory of beatitude (*gloria beatitudinis*). In the second place, Christ's suffering—which includes not only His suffering in death but His suffering in life—as absolutely voluntary, was a "satisfaction" for our sin. The satisfaction was such that God had more love for the gift than hatred for the injury. This leads Thomas to conclude that the satisfaction offered in the divine-human life of the Mediator was not only sufficient, but "superabundant." Christ, from love and obedience, suffered *more* than was required to balance the injury to God done by the whole human race: not only because of the magnitude of the love which led Him to suffer; not only because it was the sacrifice of the God-man; but because it was an infinite suffering. It is worthy of remark that Thomas does not speak of a vicarious penal suffering. In the third place, by His voluntary suffering, Christ

merited exaltation, but as this exaltation cannot be conferred upon one who is already divine, it passes over from Him to the Church of which He is the Head. For, just as the natural body is a unity, consisting of diverse members, so the whole Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is counted as one person with its Head, that is, Christ. Thus the satisfaction of Christ applies to all *believers* (*fideles*). The faith, however, by which we are cleansed from sin is not unformed faith (*fides informis*), which can exist even along with sin, but faith informed by love (*fides formata per caritatem*), which alone is effectual.<sup>1</sup>

We have now seen the interpretation which Thomas gives to the articles of faith. It is, however, in his doctrine of the Sacraments that the sovereignty of the Church received his strongest support. Faith lives in the contemplation and enjoyment of the Sacraments; these are committed to the Church and are administered by the hierarchy; and thus the Church as an ecclesiastical organization is identified with the mystical person of Christ. This is the fundamental thought of Medieval Catholicism, of which Thomas is the spokesman.

The Sacraments of the Church, Thomas tells us, "have efficacy from the Incarnate Word Himself." "In some way" they "cause grace." The Sacraments are the "instruments" through which God "communicates in grace His own nature," but they act "not by virtue of their own form, but only through the impulse they receive from the principal agent." "Hence, the effect does not derive its character from the instrument, but from the principal agent."

<sup>1</sup> *Com. Theor.* 199-200; *Summa*, iii. Q. 46, Art. 1-3; Q. 48, Art. 1-4; Q. 49, Art. 1, 2, 6.

## 390 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

The Sacraments "are applied to men by divine appointment for the purpose of causing grace in them." They are thus "at once causes and signs, and hence it is commonly said of them, that they *effect what they symbolize.*" If it is objected that the passion of Christ is surely sufficient in itself for salvation, it is answered that the Sacraments are not useless, "because they work in the power of Christ's suffering, and the passion of Christ is *somewhat* applied to men through the Sacraments." There is contained in the Sacraments "a certain instrumental virtue for conveying grace," and this virtue originates "from the benediction of Christ and the application of it by the minister to Sacramental use," a virtue which must be ultimately referred to the "principal agent."<sup>1</sup> The Thomistic doctrine of the Sacraments is, as Harnack says,<sup>2</sup> "at bottom nothing but a reduplication of the redemption by Christ, or, to put it otherwise, a second structure above the first, by which the first is crushed to the ground. As grace was conceived of physically, while this physical grace could not be directly connected with the death of Christ or derived from it, it was necessary to associate with God the Redeemer, besides the *instrumentum conjunctum* (the God-man Jesus), still another *instrumentum separatum* (the Sacraments)." By the conception of grace as a physical, mysterious act, by means of which objective benefits were conferred, Thomas virtually made the lower side of Augustinianism the higher, and thus destroyed its spirit.

We have still to consider the Thomistic theory of the State in its relation to the Church.<sup>3</sup> Even if there

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, iii. Q. 60-64.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack's *History of Dogma*, Eng. ed., vi. 21 [6], note.

<sup>3</sup> *De Regin. Princip. (Opusc. 20) passim.*

had been no Fall, man would have found it necessary to unite in the order of the State. On the other hand, without the Fall there would have been no slavery, which involves the subjection of the slave to the interest of his master. But there is a rule over others, which is perfectly compatible with the freedom of the governed ; firstly, because man is by nature a social being, and there can be no social life without a leader, whose sole interest is the common weal ; secondly, because it is unreasonable that a man who is distinguished above his fellows in knowledge and justice should not employ his talents for the good of others. Now, law is a certain ordinance of reason with a view to the common good, entrusted to him whose function it is to secure that end. There is among men a natural law, based upon the distinction between good and evil ; and human laws are special ordinances in conformity with this natural law. The question may be raised whether it is the aim of legislation to prohibit all the transgressions to which men are liable. The answer of Thomas is that, as human laws are applicable to all citizens, the majority of whom are not perfect in virtue, the State should only forbid those things which the majority are able to avoid, and mainly those injuries the prevention of which is necessary for the security of human society. The State should not enforce all virtuous acts, but only those essential to the common weal. The aim of the governors should be to secure peace and unity among the citizens. There are two exceptions to the general principle of obedience to the ruling powers : first, when their commands conflict with a higher power ; second, when they command something not within their jurisdiction. Hence in all that concerns the inner springs of the will, man is under obligation

## 392 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

to God alone. But citizens are under obligation to obey the law so far as their social acts are concerned. This obligation, however, does not extend to those bodily acts which concern the preservation of the body and the perpetuation of the species; here the obligation is to God alone. Hence, sons are not under obligation to obey their parents in determining whether they shall marry or live a life of celibacy. But in all that concerns human affairs, the subject is under obligation to obey his superiors—the soldier to obey the general, the slave the master, the son his father.

Besides natural and human law there must be a divine law in order that man may be led to attain to eternal happiness. The representative of divine law is the Church, and the Church comes to unity in the Pope. The necessity of the Papacy is proved thus: If the Church is to be a unity, all believers must have one faith. Now, disputes arise in regard to points of faith, and unless these can be settled the unity of the Church will be destroyed. Hence there must be a single person to represent the unity of the Church. Now, it is evident that Christ cannot permit the Church, which He loves and for which He shed His blood, to fall in pieces; and therefore it was ordained by Christ that there should be a leader and ruler of the Church. And this ruler, the Pope, must be the supreme authority in matters of faith. A new edition of the articles of faith is necessary for the avoidance of errors that from time to time arise. It is the function of him who has authority to determine what are matters of faith, and to issue this new edition, in order that all may hold fast by the faith. Hence the Pope must determine all the more difficult questions which affect the faith of the

Church. For it is essential that the faith of the Church should be one, and this cannot be secured unless there is a single head of the whole Church whose decision will be accepted by all.

How far are Christians under obligation to obey their earthly superiors? In seeking to answer this question we must consider that faith in Christ is the principle and cause of justice. Hence by faith in Christ justice is not overthrown but confirmed. But justice requires that subjects should obey their superiors, since otherwise the stability of society would be impossible. Hence, believers are not freed from the obligation to obey their earthly princes by faith in Christ. At the same time they are not called upon to obey an usurper or unjust prince, unless under peculiar circumstances. What, then, is the duty of Christians when a prince becomes an apostate from the Christian faith, *i.e.* the faith of the Church? Thomas answers that unbelief in itself is not in contradiction with sovereignty, because sovereignty is based on the law of nations, which is human law, whereas the distinction between believers and unbelievers is based on divine law, which does not abrogate human law. No one who sins by unbelief can lose the sovereignty by a decree of the Church. It is not the function of the Church to punish those who have never accepted the Christian faith. On the other hand, it may punish by a decree unbelievers who have hitherto accepted the Christian faith, and punish them by releasing their subjects from obedience to their authority. For the apostate may by his authority corrupt or destroy the faith, since he cherishes evil in his heart. So soon, therefore, as he has been excommunicated by a decree of the Church, his subjects are by that fact released from his rule. It is true that the Church did not

## 394 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

excommunicate Julian the apostate, but this arose from the fact that at that time the Church was still weak, and therefore permitted believers to obey him in matters that were not contrary to the faith, in order to avoid even greater danger to it.

Thomas applies the same principles in the case of unbelievers, heretics and apostates. Among unbelievers are heathens and Jews, who have never accepted the faith. These cannot be forced to become Christians, because faith is a matter of the will. But they may be prevented by believers from obstructing the faith, whether by calumnies, evil persuasions or open persecutions. And hence, believers frequently make war on unbelievers, not to force them to accept Christianity, but only to prevent them from obstructing the true faith. Heretics and apostates, on the other hand, must be subjected even to corporal punishment, in order that they may be compelled to fulfil what they have promised and to hold fast what they have once accepted.

These principles are consistently applied to the question of intercourse between believers and unbelievers. The Church forbids believers to have any intercourse with those unbelievers who have deviated from the faith either by corrupting it or by renouncing it as apostates. Against both the Church pronounces the punishment of excommunication. As to intercourse with those who have never been Christians, we have to consider position, circumstances and age. Those who are strong in the faith may have intercourse with unbelievers, because they may be able to convert them to the true faith; but those whose faith is weak must be forbidden intercourse with men who might seduce them from their faith.

Thomas does not admit that in principle there

should be any toleration of other religions. The religious rites of unbelievers may indeed be tolerated, so far as these contain something useful or true, as in the case of the Jews, whose religion was a type of Christianity; but the rites of other unbelievers, which contain nothing true or useful, are in no way to be tolerated, except to avoid some evil or as a means of gradually leading unbelievers to the true faith.

As to the treatment of heretics, we must distinguish between what concerns themselves and what concerns the Church. The heretic is guilty of a sin which deserves not only excommunication but death. For it is much worse to corrupt the faith, in which is the life of the soul, than to utter false money. If therefore the coiner may be handed over to the earthly prince to be put to death, with much more right may the heretic be not only excommunicated but punished with death. But the Church has compassion for the erring, and therefore it does not condemn the heretic at once, but only after a "first and second admonition" according to the teaching of the Apostle (*Titus iii. 10*). But if he is stubborn and unyielding in his heresy, so that the Church can no longer hope for his conversion, then, in its care for the salvation of others, it may excommunicate him and hand him over to the earthly court, in order that he may be removed by death from the world.

I shall not attempt to criticise in detail the system of this cloistered philosopher. The outline of it just given may enable us to realize more vividly how far the modern world has travelled from the whole medieval view of life, and may help to convince us that no compromise is logically possible between

## 396 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

a completely reasoned system of truth and an ecclesiastical system based upon authority. The medieval conception of the State as subordinate to the Church, and of the Sacraments as possessing in themselves a mysterious spiritual efficacy, was shattered to pieces by the Reformation ; the external authority of the articles of faith, and the consequent opposition of faith and reason, has been overthrown by the whole development of science and philosophy in the modern world. The system of Thomas in truth contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. The opposing elements in it are only held together by perpetual compromises, that conceal but do not get rid of the contradiction which they hold in check. The fundamental contradiction is that faith is assumed to be absolutely exclusive of reason. What lends colour to this assumption is that reason is conceived to be capable of no higher comprehension of things than that which results from the application of the category of causality; the consequence of which is that the vision of the divine is identified with a mystical elevation only reached in fitful moments by a few select souls. Thus the true spirit of Christianity, which draws no fundamental distinction between men, and denies any abstract opposition between the divine and the human, is perverted ; and religion, instead of being a continuous life in God, is made a thing of rare and exceptional inspiration, possible only to a few. The same defect besets the ascetic ideal. It is not seen that, if religion cannot transform every human being and every part of life, it confesses its own one-sidedness ; that the Christian must live in the whole, whether he is sweeping the steps of the temple or ministering at the altar ; that the carpenter is not less a servant of the Lord than the statesman.

In short, the spirit of the modern world demands the complete union of freedom and reason, whether it deals with the construction of society, the search for truth, or the practical problems of everyday life. Man is spirit, and for spirit nothing is real that is not at once self-evolved and coincident with the truth of things; and neither self-evolution nor truth is possible without the freest play of the seeking, testing, constructive reason. Whatever does not do homage to this fundamental principle is still infected with the separatist spirit of the medieval world, and must and will be swept away in the onward movement of humanity.

## LECTURE FIFTEENTH

### LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

THE beginning of the modern world is characterized by a liberation of the spirit of man from the weight of authority and tradition, a liberation which includes that of the reflective intellect. Hence we can understand how it came about that a new epoch of philosophy began in the century which followed the Reformation. The same spiritual process by which Protestantism separated itself from Catholicism led to the separation of philosophy from the theology of the middle ages. Prior to the Reformation there was no philosophy standing upon the independent basis of reason ; for reason was allowed to exercise itself only under presupposition of the dogmas of the Church, and therefore it was either employed in the defence of preconceptions, or where it freed itself from these, it had to disguise itself as a defender of the faith. But, when Protestantism had thrown off the weight of external authority and taken its stand upon the religious experience of the individual soul, philosophy made a similar claim for reflection. As Luther protested against the power and authority of the Church, on the ground that it had often erred and contradicted itself, refusing to recognize that anything



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 399

could be accepted as true which could not be proved by scripture or plain grounds of reason, so Descartes begins his philosophy by maintaining that all so-called truths must be held as doubtful until they can be established by the incontrovertible testimony of reason. It is true that Descartes expressly excepts from the criticism of reason the "mysteries" of faith, but in the construction of his philosophy he allows nothing to be admitted as true which does not bear the test of his criterion of "clear and distinct" consciousness. Thus philosophy virtually affirmed the principle that only the rational is real, and prepared the way for the acceptance or rejection of those "mysteries," according as they do or do not bear the test of the free and open criticism of reason.

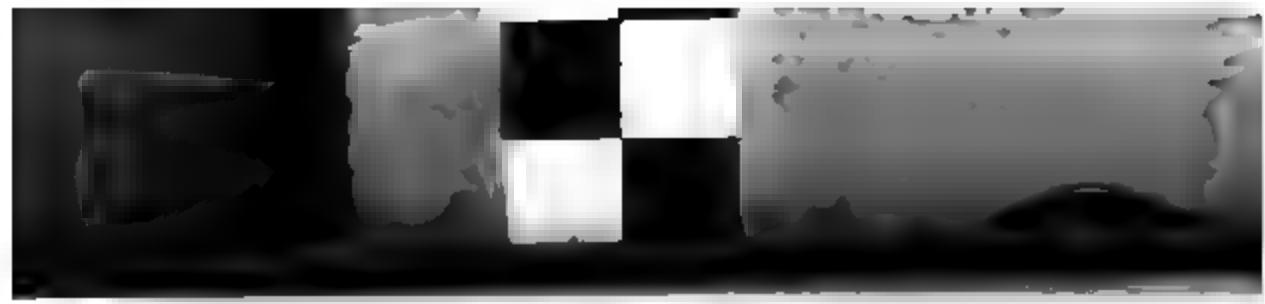
Spinoza, the successor of Descartes, carries out the Cartesian doubt in an unflinching way. For him, philosophy is not merely a systematic view of the ordinary world of experience, but it is the only way to the higher life. The source of all the unrest and evil of the world he finds in the partial and limited view of existence which is assumed by the ordinary or uncritical consciousness, and therefore he pursues his calling of philosopher with a full conviction of the greatness of the issues at stake. Descartes, even if philosophical speculation should fail, could fall back upon the truths of faith; for Spinoza the failure of philosophy meant complete spiritual bankruptcy. Such a failure he believed impossible. He conceived himself to have proved, with all the rigidity and convincing force of demonstration, that all finite forms of existence are modes of a single absolute Substance; and the secret of life he found in contemplating all things *sub specie aeternitatis*, i.e. from the point of view of the Infinite and Eternal. Thus with Spinoza philosophy

## 400 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

is the substitute for theology. There can be no place for "mysteries" of faith in a system which seeks to explain all things from the necessary idea of God, and regards every change in the external world, and every idea in the mind of man, as following by inviolable necessity from the fixed and unchangeable nature of God.

The absolute antagonism of philosophy and theology, as implied and indeed expressed by Spinoza, could not be the last word. It rested upon the assumption that the mysteries of faith are a tissue of preconceptions, which philosophy by its independent development shows to be irrational. To Leibnitz the content of theology seemed to be essentially rational, and to the defence of theology he therefore set himself in his *Théodicée*. It is to the exposition and criticism of this defence that I propose especially to direct attention in this lecture. To understand it fully, something must be said in regard to the main positions of Protestant Theology, so far as these are dealt with in the treatise of Leibnitz.

The Reformation was primarily not a theological but a religious movement. The Reformers were not led to throw off the bondage of authority from a conviction of the falsehood or inadequacy of the dogmatic system of the Church: the moving principle of their antagonism was an intense consciousness of the natural sinfulness of the human heart, and the consequent necessity of regeneration by faith in Christ. It is for this reason that even Melanchthon, who first attempted to formulate the principles of the Reformation in a systematic way, exhibits a certain aversion to dogma, or at least to those dogmas which formed the main substance of the old system. In the first edition of his *Loci* he has nothing



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 401

to say of the doctrine of God, of the Trinity, or of the person of Christ, but concentrates his whole attention upon the doctrines of sin and grace, and others closely connected with them. So also the Augsburg Confession sought to set forth those doctrines in which Protestantism differed from the traditional system. It was inevitable, however, that an attempt should be made to formulate a complete system of doctrine, and hence in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession all the main ideas of Protestant as distinguished from Catholic doctrine are dealt with. So strongly was the infinity of God emphasized that the tendency was to deny any reality to the finite. Carried out to its logical consequences, this view, at least as stated by its exponents, introduces contradiction into the divine nature; for if evil as well as good is the product of the divine activity, it would seem that the divine nature, as indifferent to good and evil, is in contradiction with itself. To escape from this contradiction the Socinians denied that man is conscious of the divine nature as it is in itself,—a view which is obviously self-contradictory, for, if man cannot know what the nature of God is, he can say nothing about God, not even that He is. The contradiction in the Protestant idea of God becomes even more apparent when an attempt is made to reconcile the various attributes of God with His absolute unity. Here the method of solution was similar to that employed by the Socinians in reconciling the self-activity of man with the omnipotence of God. The distinction of attributes, it was said, is merely subjective: in Himself God is a unity, absolutely simple, real and perfect, and hence the attributes which for us are distinct are in God identical. In the doctrine of the Trinity, Protestant theologians abandoned even the attempt to

## 402 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

reconcile the unity of God with the distinction of the three persons, maintaining the doctrine to have no basis in reason, and even to be contrary to reason. Melanchthon, indeed, made a suggestive attempt to explain the relation of the Father and the Son by the idea of the divine Reason or Logos as essentially self-revealing ; but his view was rejected, and an appeal was made to what was believed to be the scriptural doctrine. In passing from the idea of God to His relation to the world, the Protestant doctrine met with two difficulties : first, the difficulty of reconciling the absolute causality of God with the existence of evil, and, secondly, the difficulty of finding any place for the activity of man. The former it sought to resolve by maintaining that evil is defect, and that all that is positive in an act is due to God ; the latter by saying that man is created a free being. In its doctrine of sin and grace Protestant theology maintained that man was originally absolutely righteous, and that the Fall completely destroyed this righteousness, so that man is incapable of himself of willing the good ; but later theologians of the Lutheran Church held that, when influenced by the Holy Spirit, man's freedom is shown by his power of yielding or refusing to yield to that influence. In Calvin, again, the doctrine of original sin was held in all its stringency, and he connected it with the doctrine of Predestination. To the objection that, in that view, evil is foreordained by God, he answered that it is not foreordained as evil, but as a means to good.

The mere statement of the Protestant theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is enough to show how strong an emphasis is laid by it upon the Infinite. Even where the freedom of the finite subject is reluctantly conceded, it is reduced to a



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 403

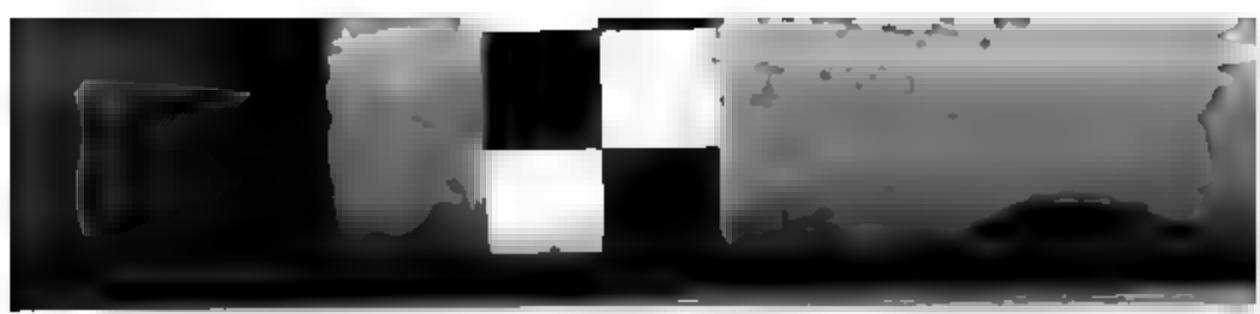
capacity of willing the good only when the influence of God transforms the sinful nature of man. Now, it is significant that in Spinoza, who approaches the problem from an entirely different point of view, the unreality and impotence of the finite subject and the absoluteness of the divine power constitute the very essence of his system. Protestant theologians supposed themselves to be deriving their doctrine directly from scripture, while in truth they were the vehicle of that revolt against medievalism, and that return upon the consciousness of self, which revealed the finitude of self apart from the infinitude of God. The same return movement led, in philosophy, first to the opposition of finite and infinite and then to the absorption of the finite in the infinite. The beginning of the movement is shown in Descartes. For, while he starts from the immediate consciousness of self as the one primary indubitable truth, he immediately goes on to point out that there can be no transition to the consciousness of the world except through the consciousness of God. Nor is this all: for Descartes, when the objection is urged that the subject, as knowing only his own states, cannot have a knowledge of God, replies that he could have no knowledge of himself unless he had a knowledge of God. To know one's self as finite presupposes a knowledge of the infinite. Thus the true first principle is obviously the consciousness of God. Moreover, Descartes, though he affirms that the self is known as a thinking substance, yet admits that, strictly speaking, there is only one Substance.

From these two admissions of Descartes—firstly, that the finite has no meaning apart from the infinite, and, secondly, that there can only be one Substance or self-subsistent Being—the philosophy of Spinoza is

## 404 PHILOSOPHICAL BASES OF RELIGION

developed. Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself: it is the state in which the individual exists who, in union with God, is beyond the division of himself and others. Whatever occurs to him he knows to proceed from the eternal nature of God, and therefore he is content with it. Not even the prospect of death can disturb his serenity, for that also he sees to follow from the whole constitution of the world. But, if the only true satisfaction of man consists in knowledge of God, why do not all men attain it? What is the explanation of imperfection? The idea of imperfection, answers Spinoza, is not positive but negative: it is merely a defect, or the absence of reality. From the absolute point of view, nothing can be called evil: everything is what it must be. When we say that a man is evil, we properly mean that he fails in that fulness of reality which characterizes the good man. The reason, therefore, why all men do not attain to the absolute point of view is, that the infinity of the divine nature must produce everything conceivable by an infinite intellect. The universe forms a chain of degrees of perfection, and the perfection of the whole demands that all degrees of perfection should exist, including the lowest, which is called evil. Thus the distinction between evil and good is not one of kind but of degree.

The necessary consequence of Spinoza's doctrine is, that finite beings have no individuality or self-determination. All reality is dissolved in the one indivisible Substance. The philosophy of Leibnitz, on the other hand, seeks to do justice at once to the absolute unity and perfection of God, and to the individuality and self-activity of finite beings. This is the ruling idea in his *Theodicee*. In the preface Leibnitz shows



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 405

that he was working towards a more comprehensive view of religion than that of the dogmatic theologians of his day. The majority of men, he says, have always identified religion with its external form. The form includes, on the one hand, religious ceremonies, and, on the other hand, a formula of belief, or creed. The former is an imperfect expression of the practical element in piety, the latter is the inadequate expression of an enlightened faith. The value of creeds and ceremonies is not to be denied, but they should be subordinated to enlightenment and virtue, which are the essential constituents of genuine piety. Paganism had no theology ; it was limited to certain ceremonial observances. Its "mysteries" did not consist in dogmas, but in certain secret practices, in which the profane or uninitiated were not allowed to take part. It was full of superstitions, which acted upon the hopes and fears of men, but it had hardly a glimpse of a future life, nor did it afford men true ideas of God and the soul. Of all ancient peoples, only the Jews had a system of religious dogmas. This little nation, inhabiting a narrow strip of territory, alone had a worthy idea of the Supreme Being, and it alone embodied that idea in public laws. Yet Moses did not include in his laws the doctrine of the immortality of the soul : it was reserved for Jesus Christ to lift the veil, and to teach, with all the force though without the authority of a lawgiver, that immortal souls pass into another life, where they receive the reward of their actions. Moses had already insisted upon the majesty and the goodness of God ; Jesus Christ showed all the consequences of these attributes. Completing what Moses had begun, He sought to make God an object not only of fear and veneration, but of love and confidence. Love is that affection which makes us

## 406 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

find pleasure in the perfection of that which is loved ; and there is nothing more perfect than God, and therefore nothing which brings greater felicity. In God we find all the perfections of which we are ourselves capable, but He possesses them in an unlimited degree : there is in us some power, knowledge, goodness ; in Him they are absolutely complete. Order, proportion, harmony, of which painting and music are scintillations, we find exhibited in nature. God is perfect order ; He always maintains just proportions ; He constitutes the universal harmony : all beauty is, therefore, a reflection from Him.<sup>1</sup>

It follows that true piety and true felicity consist in the love of God, a love in which ardour is accompanied by light. This species of love gives rise to that pleasure in good actions which throws virtue into relief, and, by relating all to God as a centre, lifts the human to the divine. For in doing our duty, in obeying reason, we fulfil the commands of the Supreme Reason ; we direct all our resolutions to the common good, which is identical with the glory of God. The aim of true religion ought, therefore, to be to impress the principles of genuine piety on the soul, *i.e.* to awaken a consciousness of the perfections of God. It is therefore of great importance to show wherein these consist, and this is the aim of the treatise.<sup>2</sup>

Natural religion has found its most perfect expression in Christianity, but Christianity also contains certain positive doctrines which transcend reason. These cannot be either proved or disproved, but it can be shown that, though they are *beyond* reason, they are not *contrary* to it. We may assume that

<sup>1</sup> *Theodicee*, Preface ; Erdmann's *Leibnitii Opera Philosophica*, pp. 468-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 469-70.



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 407

there can be no contradiction between two kinds of truth. Now, the object of Faith is the truth which God has revealed in an extraordinary manner, while Reason is the system of truths to which the human mind is able to attain without aid from the illumination of faith. The truths thus connected together may be furnished to reason by experience, or they may proceed from reason itself, in entire independence of sense. The truths of reason are therefore of two kinds. The first kind consists of what may be called . eternal truths, which are absolutely necessary, so that their opposite involves a contradiction. Such are those truths the necessity of which is logical, metaphysical, or mathematical, and the denial of which leads to absurdity. There is, however, another class of truths, which may be called positive, because they consist of the laws which God has seen fit to give to nature. These we learn either *& posteriori*, i.e. by experience, or *& priori*, i.e. by reflection upon the reasons which have caused them to be chosen. They are due to the free choice of God, and not to geometrical necessity. Hence we may say that physical necessity is based upon moral necessity, or, in other words, it is due to the choice of the Supreme Wisdom ; while both are to be distinguished from metaphysical or geometrical necessity. Physical necessity constitutes the order of nature, and consists in the laws of motion, and in certain other general laws which it has pleased God to give to things in bringing them into being. These laws have not been imposed upon nature without reason, for God does nothing from caprice or accident, or from absolute indifference. At the same time, since the laws of nature are conditionally necessary, i.e. have been enacted only because of their fitness for the

## 408 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

purposes of God, they may be suspended in special cases when a higher end requires it. We can thus understand how God may set aside the laws which He has imposed upon created things, or perform a miracle. For the laws of nature are always subject to the dispensation of the lawgiver. Eternal truths cannot be superseded, and therefore faith can never be contrary to them ; but, as physical truth is only conditionally necessary, no valid objection can be made against the mysteries of religion on the ground that they transcend the laws of nature.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to observe that an article of faith may be explained without being comprehended. Even in natural science this distinction holds good. Thus we can explain many sensible qualities up to a certain point without being able to carry our explanation to the point of complete comprehension. Hence it is not surprising that we cannot demonstrate the mysteries of faith by reason. But, though we cannot comprehend them, we can show that they are not contrary to reason.<sup>2</sup>

We can now see in what sense the ordinary distinction between what transcends reason and what contradicts reason is to be interpreted. The distinction corresponds generally to the conditional necessity of natural law and the absolute necessity of the eternal truths of reason. Nothing can contradict those truths which are absolutely certain : while that which is beyond reason is merely contrary to what we learn from experience, or what we are able to comprehend. There are truths which lie beyond the range of our comprehension, and perhaps even beyond the range of all created intelligences, but there are no truths which are contrary to

<sup>1</sup> *Theodice*, Secs. 1-3, pp. 479-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Sec. 5, pp. 480-1.



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 409

reason ; for reason is not a collection of opinions, nor even of those conceptions which are based upon the ordinary course of nature, but an inviolable system of truth.<sup>1</sup>

The view which has just been set forth, that nothing can be contradictory of reason, is denied by Bayle, who maintains that the truths of faith are beset by insoluble contradiction, and that there are even philosophical truths which we must believe, but which we cannot make intelligible. As an instance of the former he cites the doctrine of Predestination, and as an instance of the latter the composition of the continuous. Now, to say that a doctrine is open to unanswerable objections is to say that contradictory propositions may both be true,—a conclusion which cannot be admitted unless we are prepared to abandon all truth. When we come to examine the instances which Bayle gives of truths of faith asserted to be contradictory of reason, we find that their supposed contradiction is due to untenable assumptions. Thus, he says that the goodness of God cannot be reconciled with His permission of evil. God, we are told, placed man in circumstances in which it was inevitable that he should sin. What should we say of a father who acted in this way? Should we not say that he was an accomplice in the evil act? Now, this objection assumes that we can apply to God precisely the same line of reasoning that we apply to man. But, in the case of an infinite being, whose mind cannot be completely understood by us, we must be content to show that the permission of evil is not necessarily incompatible with perfect justice. In the absence of complete knowledge of the mind of God, we must fall back upon general reasons. We know that God has to pay regard to the good of the whole universe, all the

## 410 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

parts of which are connected in the unity of a single system ; and we must conclude that, seeing things in an infinity of relations, He judged that it was not consistent with the perfection of the whole to prevent evil. The fact that evil exists implies that it must be consistent with absolute goodness, justice and holiness ; and this conclusion must hold, although we cannot show *a priori* what are the reasons which God had for permitting it. The objections to the compatibility of evil with the divine goodness are mere probabilities, which cannot stand for a moment against the demonstrable truth that God exists and is infinitely wise and just. Some thinkers fall back upon the doctrine that what we call justice has no meaning when applied to God ; and hence they say that God, as the absolute Lord of all things, may condemn the innocent without violating His justice. But this view is virtually a denial of God, for how could such a being be distinguished from the Evil Principle ? There is no need for such a heroic treatment of the difficulty. We are not called upon to renounce reason as the sole means of preserving faith ; to "put out our eyes in order to see more clearly" : all that is necessary is to hold that what seems to be contrary to reason is only apparently contrary to it. Nor is there anything irrational in such a view : even in the case of natural phenomena, we have to go beyond the appearances of sense in order to get at the real truth of things. It is only appearances which can be adduced as incompatible with the goodness and justice of God.<sup>1</sup>

Bayle pretends to be defending faith at the expense of reason. As we have seen, he really destroys the foundation of all truth, inasmuch as he denies the absoluteness of the principle of contradiction. It is

<sup>1</sup> *Theodice*, Secs. 32, 34-8, pp. 488-91.



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 411

also worth remarking that what he adduces as a triumph of faith over reason is in part a triumph of rational demonstration over sophistry. The Manichaean denial of the absolute goodness of God is hardly more opposed to Revealed than to Natural Theology. It cannot be denied that there is in the world both physical and moral evil, and that physical evil is not always distributed in proportion to moral evil, as justice seems to demand. The problem therefore remains for Natural Theology to explain how a single Principle, all-wise, all-good and all-powerful, can be reconciled with the existence of evil, especially moral evil, and with the happiness of the wicked and the unhappiness of the good. Now, we have no need of revelation to be assured that there is a single Principle of all things, and that this Principle is perfectly wise and good. Reason is able to establish this truth by infallible demonstration; and hence all objections drawn from the course of natural events, in which imperfections are observed, rest merely upon appearances. If we could contemplate the universe in its completeness, we should see that what we are tempted to regard as a defect is in reality essential to the whole: we should, in fact, not only believe, but see, that all is for the best,—*i.e.* we should not merely observe the products of divine wisdom, but we should also have an insight into the reasons which have led to them. The actual condition of human knowledge is well expressed by St. Paul when he says that "we walk by faith and not by sight." We know by demonstration that God is absolutely wise, and we learn by experience that evil exists; thus we are forced to conclude that infinite wisdom is compatible with the existence of evil. We cannot in all cases demand that nothing should be admitted to be true except that of which we have an "adequate conception," *i.e.* a conception

## 412 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

which involves nothing that we cannot explain. Even in the region of our ordinary sensible experience, there are many things which we must accept as facts without being able to explain them. Thus, we perceive things to have such qualities as heat, light, and sweetness, but we cannot explain why they have these qualities. The same thing holds good in regard to the truths of faith. To have an "adequate notion" of these, we should require to be omniscient. It is enough that we can make them intelligible to ourselves by analogy, so that in speaking of such doctrines as the Trinity and the Incarnation we may not use words which are destitute of all meaning. To suppose that the terms we make use of have no meaning—that e.g. justice in God differs *toto coelo* from justice in man—is pure scepticism. Those who dispute as to whether there is one ultimate Principle of the universe which is absolutely good, or whether there are two Principles, the one good and the other evil, must agree in what they mean by the terms "good" and "evil," or there is no real dispute and no possibility of resolving it. When we speak of the union of the soul and the body, we understand what is meant by the term "union." In the same way, when we speak of the union of the Logos with human nature, we understand what is meant though we cannot explain how this union takes place. In this case, where we are dealing with the supersensible, we must be content with analogical knowledge, such as a comparison of the union of soul and body is competent to give. Just as the soul is in the most intimate union with the body, while yet the laws of the one are independent of the laws of the other, so we must say that in the Incarnation there was the most intimate union of Creator and creature. This is the general principle which we must apply to all the



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 413

mysteries of faith. We know what is ( $\tau\acute{\imath}\ \acute{e}\pi\tau\acute{\imath}$ ), but we do not know how it is ( $\pi\acute{o}\sigma\acute{s}$ ). The "how" is reserved for God alone: the "what" is knowable by us.<sup>1</sup>

So far Leibnitz has merely sought to show that there can be no contradiction between reason and revealed religion; his next aim is to construct a self-consistent system of natural theology. The main problems which he discusses are, how the absoluteness of God can be reconciled with human freedom, and the goodness of God with the existence of physical and moral evil. The difficulties may be thus stated. In the first place, the freedom of man seems to be incompatible with the divine nature, and yet freedom is necessary if man is to be regarded as morally responsible and worthy of punishment. In the second place, even if the freedom of man is granted, God seems to have a share in the production of evil, and this appears to be contrary to the divine goodness, holiness and justice.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulties which arise from a consideration of the freedom of man may be summarized as follows: The prescience of God, it may be said, renders the future absolutely certain and determined; for prescience implies preordination, and preordination is the willing of all events, including the volitions of man. Thus it would seem that, whether man's acts are good or evil, he has no power to do otherwise; from which it appears to follow that he is worthy neither of reward nor of punishment. But this conclusion destroys morality, and is the denial of all justice, both human and divine. Again, even if human freedom is admitted, many difficulties still remain. When man wills evil, the whole reality or substance of his act, it is said, is produced by God, since from Him finite beings receive all the

<sup>1</sup> *Théodicée*, Secs. 43-4, 54-6, pp. 491-2, 494.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Sec. 1, p. 504.

## 414 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

reality they possess ; whence it is inferred that God is the real cause of human actions, since He acts with absolute freedom, and with a perfect knowledge of all the consequences which must flow from His act. Nor is it any answer to say that God does not produce the acts of man, but merely consents to their production by man ; for the evil act could not take place without the divine consent, and even without some predetermination on the part of God. From this it seems to follow that God is indifferent to good and evil, unless we fall back upon the doctrine of the Manichaeans that there are two Principles, the one good and the other evil. Moreover, in the ordinary doctrine of theologians and philosophers, conservation is a continual creation, and hence God is continually creating beings who are corrupt and sinful. A way of escape from some of these difficulties may be sought by saying that the concurrence of God in the evil acts of man does not mean that God wills evil, but only that He permits it. But to this it is replied that God must have known all that would follow when He placed man in certain circumstances. Man is exposed to a temptation to which it is known that he will succumb ; it is known that by his fall the whole human race will be infected with evil, and thus put under a sort of necessity of sinning ; that death and other evils will be introduced, with all the misery and wretchedness which ordinarily affect the good and bad alike ; that vice will prevail and virtue be oppressed ; and it thus seems hard to believe that any Providence governs the course of events. These difficulties are very much increased when we consider the life to come, since only a small number of men will be saved, while all the rest will perish eternally. Moreover, those who are destined to salvation are rescued from the corrupt mass by an



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 415

irrational election ; and this holds good whether we say that God, in choosing them, has had regard to their future good acts, their faith or their works, or that He has endowed them with good qualities because He has predestined them to salvation. Even if we say that God desires to save all men, and has caused His Son to take upon Him the nature of man, in order to atone for their sins, so that all who believe in Him shall be saved ; it yet remains true, that faith in Him is a gift of God, that man is dead to all good works, that a preventient grace must operate upon his will, and that God gives to him the will and the deed. Thus, whatever view we take, we must at last admit that God is the ultimate reason of salvation, grace, faith and election. Whether we say that election is the cause or the consequence of the design of God, it remains true, that He gives faith or salvation to whomsoever it seems good to Him, without any reason for His choice, and that His choice falls only upon a small number of men.<sup>1</sup>

In seeking to show that these difficulties are not unanswerable, Leibnitz begins by saying that the conception of God as an absolute ruler, exercising despotic power over all His creatures, is a conception unworthy of the true nature of God, who is not properly an object of fear, but of love. His aim will therefore be to remove the false ideas which prevent men from having a knowledge of His perfections, and therefore of experiencing for Him that love which His perfections are fitted to call forth, and that blessedness which falls to those who love Him.<sup>2</sup>

God is the ultimate reason or explanation of things ; for those things which are finite, as are all that we see and experience, are contingent, having

<sup>1</sup> *Theodice*, Secs. 2-5, pp. 504-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Sec. 6, pp. 505-6.

## 416 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

nothing in them which renders their existence necessary. The contingency of finite things compels us to seek for the reason of the existence of the world, i.e. of the entire assemblage of contingent things, and this we can find only in a Being who is self-subsistent, or contains within himself the reason of his own existence,—a Being who is therefore necessary and eternal. This Cause must also be intelligent; for the world which exists being contingent, and an infinity of other worlds being equally possible and, so to speak, equally claiming to exist, the Cause of the world must stand in relation to all these possible worlds, in order to determine one of them. Now, this relation of an existing substance to simple possibilities can be nothing else than an Intelligence which has ideas of them, and the determination of one of them can be nothing but the act of will which chooses them. It is the power of this Being which renders his will efficacious. Power has reference to existence, wisdom or intelligence to truth, and will to goodness. This Intelligence must be infinite in all its modes, and absolutely perfect in power, wisdom and goodness, since it has reference to all that is possible. As all things are intimately connected, there is no reason for holding more than one intelligence. The intelligence of God is the source of essences, His will is the origin of existences. Now this supreme wisdom, combined with a goodness no less infinite, cannot fail to choose the best. For as a less degree of evil is a kind of good, so a less degree of good is a kind of evil, in so far as it prevents a greater good. If, of all the possible worlds, none was better or worse than another, God would not have produced any. The world which He has produced we must therefore regard as the best possible, since He does



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 417

nothing which is not in accordance with supreme wisdom. Should any one object that the world might have been without moral and physical evil, Leibnitz answers that such a world would not have been the best. It must be observed that, in any possible world, all the parts must be systematically connected. Hence the absence of the least evil which takes place in the world would change its whole character.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt we cannot show in detail that a world in which evil exists is the best possible,—for how can we grasp an infinity of particulars and compare them with one another?—but we are entitled to infer from the fact that God has chosen this world that it is the best possible. We can, however, show generally that the difficulties arising from the existence of evil are not insoluble.<sup>2</sup>

The main difficulty arises from the existence of physical and moral evil. In regard to these forms of evil we must say, that the best possible world, as it lay before the divine intelligence, included evil, and this it was which determined God to permit it.<sup>3</sup>

But why, it may be objected, do you speak of God "permitting evil"? If God is the author of all things, must we not say that He *wills* it, not merely that He *permits* it? To answer this question, we must first explain the nature of will. Speaking generally, we may say that will consists in "the inclination to do something in proportion to the good which it contains." The will is called "antecedent" when it has reference to each good apart in so far as it is good. In this sense we may say that God is inclined to all good in so far as it is good. He

<sup>1</sup> *Théodicée*, Secs. 7-9, p. 506.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Sec. 10, pp. 506-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Secs. 20-1, pp. 509-10.

## 418 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

has a serious inclination to save all men, and to exclude evil. This "antecedent" will would be realized, were there not stronger reasons to prevent its realization. Such realization, however, belongs only to will "consequent," which results from the concourse of all particular volitions. We may compare it to the resultant of composite movements in mechanics. Adopting this distinction, we may say that God desires the good *antecedently* and the *best* consequently. We cannot say that God desires moral evil at all, nor does He desire physical evil absolutely. There is no absolute predestination to moral evil, and physical evil God desires either as a penalty for sin or as the means of preventing greater evil or securing greater good. We must carefully distinguish between moral and physical evil. It is true that moral evil may be the means of securing a good or preventing an evil, but we cannot admit that either the divine or human will may do evil in order that good may result. Moral evil can never be willed by God, but can only be permitted. This may be partly understood by an analogy. Thus, an officer whose duty it is to guard an important post cannot leave it in order to prevent two soldiers from killing each other. His permission of evil is the consequence of his regard for the higher obligation of defending the city. So God, always seeking the best, permits sin; for it would be contrary to His wisdom, goodness, and perfection if He did not follow the result of all His tendencies to good, notwithstanding the evil which is involved in willing the best.<sup>1</sup>

It may be objected, however, that it is God Himself who acts in all cases, and hence that it is He who does all that is real in the sin of the creature.

<sup>1</sup> *Theodicee*, Secs. 22-25, pp. 510-11.



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 419

This objection brings us to a consideration of what has been called the "concurrence" of God. We must accept the view of Augustine, that evil is a privation of being. We may compare the relation of God and finite beings to the force of a current upon a ship. Just as the current communicates motion to the ship, while the ship moves more or less swiftly according as it is more or less heavily laden, so God produces in created beings all the perfection or power which they display, while their imperfection is due to their nature as finite beings. Moral evil, therefore, is not due to God, but to the absence of clear reason and force of will.<sup>1</sup> "That which is real in the evil action, the power to act, is perfect and good, and comes from God: the negative or evil element in it comes from the agent himself. God is not responsible for sin, for He has only permitted it, not willed it directly, and man was already evil before he was created. The fact that God foresaw that man would sin does not constrain the latter to commit the evil deed, but this follows from his nature as a finite being, which God left unaltered when He granted him existence."<sup>2</sup>

Moral evil, then, like error, consists in privation. The will tends in general to the good: it seeks to reach the perfection which is in consonance with it, and supreme perfection is in God. All pleasure has in it some feeling of perfection, but when the agent limits himself to the willing of some lower pleasure, to the prejudice of a greater good, his will is defective or evil. Hence the truth of the saying, that "the cause of evil is not efficient, but deficient."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Theodicee*, Secs. 29-30, p. 512.

<sup>2</sup> Falckenberg's *History of Modern Philosophy*, English tr. p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> *Theodicee*, Sec. 33, p. 513.

## 420 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Besides the objection that God is the cause of the evil acts of finite beings, it has been urged that the "concurrence" of God is incompatible with the freedom of man. That which is foreseen, it is said, cannot fail to exist, and hence, if God foresees the actions of man, these must be necessary. But it must be pointed out that our volitions are not necessary in the sense that their opposite implies a contradiction ; they are only conditionally necessary. To one who knows all the motives by which a certain man will in certain circumstances be actuated, what he will do can be foreseen ; but it is none the less true that his act will be free. The foreknowledge of God does not determine the act. The act does not take place because it is foreseen : it takes place only because it is willed.<sup>1</sup>

To this it may be objected, that, although the foreknowledge of God does not determine the act, yet nothing which does not occur in a fixed way can be foreseen. This objection is not so formidable as it looks. We must distinguish between the two great principles of reason, (1) the principle of contradiction, which affirms that of two contradictory propositions the one is true, the other false, and (2) the principle of determinant reason, which affirms that nothing ever takes place without a reason sufficient to account for it. The former principle applies only to truths which are absolutely necessary, as that  $2 + 2 = 4$  ; the latter principle applies to all events, and we must not attempt to preserve freedom by exempting our volitions from its scope. The will is never led to choose a certain course of action without a reason which prevails over all other reasons. This principle applies to God as well as to man ; God always chooses the best, because there is a predominant reason for His choice. But this

<sup>1</sup> *Theodice*, Secs. 37-8, p. 514.



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 421

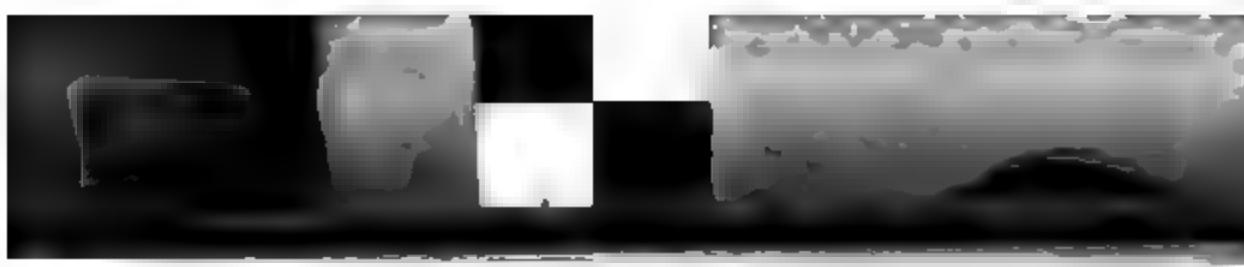
by no means implies that He is under external constraint ; other sequences of things are possible, and when He chooses the best, it is only because He always wills what is the greatest good. To suppose that to will what is best is a defect, is a manifest absurdity, leading to the conclusion that freedom consists in pure caprice. The decree of God, therefore, consists solely in His resolve to bring into existence the best of all the possible worlds which are present to His intelligence. It is thus manifest that His decree changes nothing in the eternal constitution of things. Knowing the constitution of things in all their particularity, He foresees what finite beings will do under all circumstances, but this in no way destroys the freedom of those beings.<sup>1</sup>

The system of pre-established harmony enables us to see how there can be perfect spontaneity or freedom, while yet an all-wise Being can foresee what acts will take place. There never is any actual physical influence of external things upon the soul. Scholastic philosophers supposed that there is a reciprocal influence between body and soul. Many modern thinkers, again, observing that a thinking being and an extended mass differ *toto genere*, have recognized that there is no physical communication between them, though they are always closely united, and constitute a single agent or person. If there actually were a physical communication, the soul by its volitions would be able to change the degree of velocity and the line of direction of certain movements which take place in the body ; and, conversely, the body would be able to change the sequence of thoughts which arise in the soul. Descartes tried to explain the influence of the soul on the body by maintaining that the former can change the direction of the movements which take place in the body, just as a

<sup>1</sup> *Theodice*, Secs. 44-5, 52, 54, pp. 515-8.

## 422 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

rider, though he does not give to the horse he rides any new force, may yet influence its direction. The Cartesian compromise is, however, plainly inadmissible, and the illustration fails to prove what it was meant to prove. The rider alters the direction of the horse by means of the bridle, bit and spur, but the soul has no material instruments by which it can change the direction of the body. It is therefore no more possible for the soul to change the line of direction of a bodily movement than to change the quantity of energy which the body possesses. This conclusion is made absolutely certain by the discovery that, in any number of bodies which act upon one another, there is a conservation of direction as well as of energy. These facts compel us to adopt the theory of a preëstablished harmony between soul and body. The physical influence of the one upon the other is inconceivable, and hence we must hold that while there is a perfect harmony between them there is no actual communication. We must therefore maintain that God has so created the soul that it produces, by its own internal energy, ideas which correspond to the changes which occur in the body, and He has so created the body that it does of itself that which the soul ordains. The soul acts from the idea of ends, and, in accordance with the evolution of its own perceptions, produces ideas which harmonize with the impressions of external things upon the bodily organs; while the movements of the body, which follow in the order of efficient causes, harmonize with the thoughts of the soul. On this view, all the changes in the soul proceed from itself, and therefore its activity is absolutely spontaneous. It is no doubt true that there is an imperfection in the constitution of the soul. All its changes proceed from itself, but they do not all proceed from its will. For there is not only an order of distinct perceptions, over



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 423

which it exercises sway, but also a sequence of confused perceptions or passions. This imperfection, indeed, is bound up with the finitude of the human soul, for if it had nothing but distinct perceptions it would be infinite. Even over confused perceptions the soul has an indirect power ; though it cannot change its passions directly, it can act upon them indirectly. So, in the region of distinct perceptions the soul is able to give itself indirectly new opinions and volitions, by seeking for reasons by which rash judgments and evil volitions may be changed.<sup>1</sup>

So much in regard to moral evil. There is much less difficulty when we come to consider physical evil. The existence of physical evil we must regard as the condition of greater good. It is to be observed that the amount of suffering in the world is not so great as it appears to discontented spirits to be. In estimating the amount of good and evil we must reckon on the positive side activity, health, and all those goods the absence of which would be felt as an evil. Most evils serve to secure for us a much greater good, or to ward off a still greater evil; others must be regarded as a punishment for sin and as a means of reformation. "Especially if we consider the world as a whole, it is evident that the sum of evil vanishes before the sum of good. It is wrong to look upon the happiness of man as the final cause of the world. No doubt God had the happiness of rational beings in mind, but not this exclusively, for they form only a part of the world, even if it be the highest part. God's purpose has reference rather to the perfection of the whole system of the universe. The harmony of the universe requires that all possible grades of reality be represented, that there should be indistinct ideas, sense, and corporeality,

<sup>1</sup> *Theodice*, Sec. 59-64, pp. 519-20.

## 424 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

not merely a realm of spirits; and with these, conditions of imperfection, feelings of pain, as well as theoretical and moral errors, are inevitably given. The connection and the order of the world demand a material element in the monad, but happiness without alloy can never be the lot of a spirit joined to a body."<sup>1</sup>

The main value of the philosophy of Leibnitz lies in its clear statement of the opposite elements of existence which demand reconciliation, and in its suggestive adumbration of the manner in which they must be combined. Everywhere he sees the necessity of reconciling the self-activity of the individual with the combination of all individuals in the unity of one world. To attempt a detailed examination of his whole philosophy would take us too far, and I shall therefore limit myself to one or two points in his philosophy of religion.

As we have seen, Leibnitz draws a strong distinction between natural and revealed religion. This distinction rests upon the opposition of that which transcends reason and that which contradicts reason. If this opposition were developed to its logical conclusion, we should have to maintain that no revealed truth can in any way be subjected to the criticism of reason, but must be accepted even if it seems to contradict reason. This, in fact, was the general view of the Protestant theology of Leibnitz's day. Leibnitz, however, virtually maintains that revealed truth must so far submit to reason, that it cannot contradict itself, or violate the necessary truths which reason reveals to us. Thus it appears that whatever can be shown to be necessary may be employed as a criterion by which the truths of faith may be judged. It is only

<sup>1</sup> Falckenberg's *History of Modern Philosophy*, p. 290.



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 425

in so far as there are truths which are not necessary but contingent that we can speak of the truths of faith as transcending reason. The whole question, therefore, comes to be, whether we can consistently maintain the opposition between necessary and contingent truths. Now, I do not think that the distinction of two *kinds* of truth is one which will bear the test of criticism. Leibnitz assumes that the foundation of all necessary truth is pure thought and that thought always proceeds by the principle of identity. Thus, having the conception of a triangle, I find by analysis that its three angles are equal to two right angles. This sounds plausible until we begin to ask upon what the conception itself depends. Obviously it depends upon the nature of space as absolutely homogeneous, and the homogeneity of space is only known to us in the process by which we determine the facts of our experience. Leibnitz has himself pointed out that space is an abstraction, or has no meaning apart from the relations of extended reality. Remove the consciousness of particular objects, and space has no reality whatever. Space is just one of the ways in which reality, as known to us in experience, is characterized. If, therefore, we maintain, as Leibnitz does, that all truths of experience are contingent, we must include in that contingency the truths of geometry. If, on the other hand, the truths of geometry are necessary, we must maintain that the truths of experience are not contingent, so far at least as their geometrical relations are concerned. It would thus seem that we must either regard all knowledge as contingent, or all as necessary ; and, in fact, the idea of contingent truth is a self-contradictory conception : truth does not admit of being divided into two kinds, and it is at bottom tautological to say that all truth is necessary.

## 426 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

To be true and to be necessary are the same thing. Now, if the truths of geometry are necessary in the sense that they state the conditions of knowable reality, can we make an exception in the case of the physical laws of nature? I do not think that we can. It is no doubt more difficult, in the complexity of particulars, to discover a physical than a geometrical law, but the law, when it is discovered, must be regarded as necessary. Here also whatever is true is necessary, and can admit of no exception.

It thus seems to me that Leibnitz's distinction of truths of reason and truths of fact cannot be accepted. It is perfectly true that there are many facts which, in the present state of our knowledge, cannot be reduced to law: but if, as Leibnitz himself maintains, the world is a system, we cannot admit that these facts are beyond the range of law. But, while we must deny the absolute distinction between truths of faith and truths of reason, we may admit that there is between them a relative distinction. So long as we are dealing with the facts of experience from the point of view of geometrical and physical law, we have only an inadequate conception of what existence implies. The highest conception of existence which we reach in this way is that of a number of finite things, related to one another in fixed ways, but yet standing apart from one another. To reach anything like an adequate view of the world, we have to view them in reference to the one principle of unity through which alone all finite things get meaning: we have, in other words, to view them in reference to God. This is the central idea in all the truths of faith. But this idea, as Leibnitz himself admits, or rather contends, is one that our reason, in its effort to explain the world, is capable of reaching. We have therefore to ask how far Leibnitz's con-



## LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 427

ception of God and His relation to the world can be accepted.

Starting from the contingency of the world as known to us, Leibnitz is led to distinguish between the conditional necessity of the order of nature and the absolute necessity of metaphysical and mathematical truths. The world that we know is conditionally necessary, because it is only one of an infinite number of possible worlds, and its existence is due to the choice made by God of the best of these worlds. The distinction thus drawn between the possible and the actual can hardly be accepted. We can no doubt distinguish in thought between what is and what might be, so long as we fix our attention upon some particular aspect of existence ; but the moment we bring this aspect into relation with the whole system of things, we see that the only possible reality is that which is capable of being actualized. Thus, we may say that it is possible that the sun should not rise to-morrow ; but, if we reflect upon what we mean, it becomes obvious that our assertion amounts to this, that, provided the whole system of things admits of it, it is possible that the sun may not rise to-morrow. The idea of possibility, in short, must always be limited to the possibility of the actual. We may, indeed, doubt whether a thing is possible or not, but our doubt depends upon our ignorance of the particular relations of things. Were our knowledge complete, the only possible would be the actual. It is thus obvious that for a Being of infinite knowledge the possible and the actual are coincident. The idea, therefore, of an infinite number of worlds as lying before the divine mind is a contradiction in terms ; and hence we cannot admit the adequacy of the Leibnitzian conception of a choice between these hypothetical worlds. To do so is

## 428 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

simply to transfer to the divine mind the limitations of the human mind.

But, while the form in which Leibnitz expresses himself is inadequate, the idea which gives force to his doctrine is essentially true. What he really means to affirm is, that any criticism of existence which maintains that existence is fundamentally imperfect, is contradictory of the very idea of God. All criticism of existence which affirms its imperfection rests upon the idea of a world which differs completely from the world that we actually know. Such a conception assumes that the world we know is, in part at least, unintelligible ; for, so far as it is not rational, it must be unintelligible. When we consider that the world which is thus declared to be imperfectly rational, is a world which has given birth to the rational beings who so criticise it, it becomes obvious that we are maintaining a self-contradictory doctrine. If the universe is irrational, it cannot contain rational beings, and hence the judgment of such beings must be irrational, and can have no validity as applied to the universe as a whole. The conception of an irrational universe is thus a self-contradictory conception. Hence Leibnitz seems to me substantially right, when he maintains that whatever is must be consistent with the absolute perfection of the whole. But if so, it is obvious that he can no longer maintain the conditional necessity of the order of nature. There is no valid process of reasoning by which we can pass from the conditionally necessary to the morally necessary. If the world is the expression of an absolute reason, it is the only possible world, and therefore the order of nature is necessary. It is necessary just because it is the expression of an absolute reason. Admit that the world is contingent, and the whole basis of the inference to the perfection



## **LEIBNITZ AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY 429**

of God is taken away. The only sense in which it can be said that the world is contingent is this, that it seems contingent to one who views it from the limited point of view of particular facts.

## **LECTURE SIXTEENTH**

### **GOD AND THE WORLD**

OUR historical studies have brought before us the struggle through which theology has passed in its effort to formulate the contents of the religious consciousness. Religion implies the reality of a single principle which unifies all existence, and therefore it is natural that, in the transition to a new era of the world's history, the very intensity of the consciousness of the Infinite should threaten to extinguish the consciousness of the Finite. Accordingly, in Philo and the Neoplatonists God is conceived as beyond all definite thought and expression, so that only by the transcendence of reason in its normal exercise can man enter into communion with Him. The influence of this mystical conception on Christian theology is most clearly seen in Gnosticism, but it also colours the religious philosophy of Augustine, though in both, and especially in the latter, the Christian conception of God as essentially self-manifesting shines through the imperfect categories in which it is sought to be expressed. In its subsequent history, Christian theology has never entirely liberated itself from this mystical tinge, though in the Middle Ages the predominant tendency, as exhibited in such thinkers as Thomas Aquinas, was to subordinate

reason to the authority of the Church, both in speculation and practice. With the Reformation and the Revival of learning, however, the principle of authority was virtually discarded, though even such thinkers as Leibnitz show a disposition to revive the old opposition of reason and revelation, in the hopeless endeavour to reconcile the free movement of philosophy with the inadequacies of the traditional creed. Such a device, as I have ventured to argue, is neither necessary nor advisable. It is not necessary, because Christianity needs no defence but its intrinsic truth ; and it is not advisable, for nothing can ultimately command the assent of a rational being but that which is rational.

If I have succeeded in giving anything like a fair account of the development of religious thought, and especially of Christian thought, I think it will be conceded that the conception of God which we have been led to adopt, as the result of our independent investigation into the nature of religion, is in essential harmony with that which was embodied in the life and teaching of the Founder of Christianity. What I have tried to prove is that the world is not a mere assemblage of objects in space and time, externally related to one another as reciprocally causative, but presupposes for its explanation a single rational principle of which nature is an expression, though an inadequate expression. Constructive Idealism therefore discards Materialism as an obviously inadequate theory. On the other hand, it refuses to accept the independent reality of mind, maintaining that mind in us comes to self-consciousness only in so far as it comprehends the world as an embodiment of a supreme reason. The doctrine of such thinkers as Herbert Spencer and others, who first conceive of matter and mind as two parallel but independent modes of being, and then

## 432 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

seek to unite them through the conception of an unknown Power of which both are the manifestation, it rejects on the ground that an unknown Power cannot be known to be manifested in the totality of our experience, but especially in our own nature, as knowing, feeling, and willing. But while Constructive Idealism thus affirms the objective reality of God, it refuses to admit that He can be conceived as a separate and independent Being standing apart from the world and only acting externally upon it ; on the contrary, it affirms that He is actually present in the world, and above all in the self-conscious life of man, while yet the infinite fulness of His being is not fully comprehended by us. It is not to be denied that in this conception of God we seem to be combining ideas that are usually supposed to be incompatible with one another ; and, therefore, it seems advisable to distinguish clearly the conception of God as here maintained from views which, however they may superficially resemble it, are yet fundamentally different in principle.

The distinction between Constructive Idealism and Agnosticism has already been indicated. For a certain distance both pursue the same path and reach the same point. It is maintained, as strongly by the one as by the other, that nature is subject to inviolable law, and that the principle of the conservation of energy may be regarded as the supreme principle of nature. The distinction between the two doctrines lies in the different way in which they conceive of the relation between nature and mind. To the agnostic there is no higher law known to us than that of the conservation of energy ; and, therefore, while he admits that the phenomena of consciousness cannot be brought under that law, he yet affirms that we must conceive the principle which accounts for both

matter and mind as a power of which we can give no further account. This attitude, as Constructive Idealism maintains, is an unconscious admission of the inadequacy of the scientific view of the world, resting as it does upon a clear perception of the truth that our own self-conscious life escapes from the framework within which an attempt is made to compress it. But just because he has assumed that knowledge cannot advance to any higher conception of the world than that employed by the special sciences, the agnostic is forced to fall back upon an inscrutable and unknowable Reality, of which we can say no more than that it *is*. Constructive Idealism, on the other hand, maintains that the law of the conservation of energy is by no means the ultimate category of knowledge: that living beings cannot be comprehended unless we employ the conception of immanent teleology, and that self-conscious beings are unintelligible unless we recognize that there operates in them the same universal principle as accounts for the universe as a whole. Hence it insists that self-conscious reason is the true principle by which all must ultimately be explained; and that, so far from that principle being unknowable by us, it is the only principle which can, in the strict sense, be said to be knowable at all, since every other breaks down in contradiction, if it is supposed to be ultimate.

While Constructive Idealism is thus positive where Agnosticism is negative, it denies that the universe can be properly regarded as containing a number of independent beings, of whom God is one; affirming that no being can exist apart from God, and that a God who is, as the personal idealist admits, finite in power, if not in knowledge, does not correspond

## 434 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

to the demand for an ultimate principle, without which our reason refuses to be satisfied. That this denial of the abstract individuality of God is not only consistent with the freedom and personality of man, but their necessary condition, I have already tried to show. It may still, however, be objected that in seeking to escape from Pluralism we have fallen into an abstract Monism, which must assume the form either of mysticism or of pantheism, both of which are fatal to our higher interests. Has this charge any real foundation?

The peculiarity of Mysticism is, not that it emphasizes the relation of the individual soul to God—other forms of the religious consciousness, such as the Jewish religion and Calvinism, do the same—but that it tends to abolish all other relations. In this sense we may apply to it the condemnation which St. Paul passed upon the Athenians, that they were “too religious.” When religion is conceived as the complete fusion of the individual soul with God, instead of spiritualizing life it is separated from life, and becomes a purely contemplative absorption in the Absolute. Further, Mysticism, just because it separates God from the world, and even from the ordinary consciousness of man, is unable to give any positive characterization of the divine nature. God is the absolute One, who is beyond being and beyond knowledge, so that in the religious consciousness even the distinction of the conscious self from the self of which it is conscious, disappears. The result is that the nature of God is absolutely unthinkable and unspeakable, and can only be experienced with the whole being. To think is to define, and even if we take thinking in its highest form as the consciousness by the self of the self, we introduce definition, and



## GOD AND THE WORLD

435

therefore limitation ; for even self-consciousness is the consciousness of the unity which is identical in all modes of consciousness, or, in its purest form, the unity of the subject as conscious, and of the subject as an object of consciousness. For the mystic the Absolute must be a Unity, in which all differences are dissolved, even the difference of subject and object ; and hence it cannot be adequately expressed by saying that it is self-conscious. Thought, in short, is a limited mode of apprehension, and as such it is incompetent to grasp the Absolute. It is only, therefore, when in certain moments of special inspiration the soul breaks away from the limits of its ordinary thought, and surrenders itself to the Divine, that it experiences what can neither be thought nor expressed.

Looked at superficially, Mysticism seems to be identical with Agnosticism, in so far as Agnosticism denies that we can have any *positive* knowledge of the Absolute. And no doubt, if we press Mysticism to its logical consequences, it empties the Absolute of all definiteness, and thus lapses into the pure Being which Agnosticism expressly affirms. But we must recognise that, while Agnosticism and Mysticism are thus in one aspect identical, there is a fundamental difference in the process by which each is reached, and, therefore, a fundamental difference in their implicit meaning. Agnosticism, as we find it in Herbert Spencer and others, is essentially a theory of the limitation of knowledge as based upon the assumption of the absolute value for knowledge of the scientific conception of the world—the conception according to which the final determination of knowable reality is the reduction of the world to a collection of objects bound together by the principle of the Conservation of Energy, which is taken as ultimate.

## 436 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

Hence, when any attempt is made to characterize reality by a higher category, the agnostic is ready with his answer, that the only view of the world which can be verified scientifically is that which regards it as under the dominion of physical law. Accordingly, he is forced to deny knowledge of the Absolute, because he recognizes that the Unity which science introduces is only the unity of system, and leaves our higher needs unexplained. Thus his denial of all positive predicates to the Absolute is due to his limited view of knowledge as confined to the objective world. But Mysticism follows a totally different course. It does not deny positive predicates to the Absolute on the ground that the scientific view of things is ultimate; on the contrary, it regards the whole sphere of scientific knowledge as concerned with what is not in the highest sense real. The true life of man is in his religious consciousness; and for the religious consciousness it is the inner life that alone has value. The scientific man, like the man of common sense, it regards as living in the particular and finite, while in truth the finite has no value in itself, but presupposes a Unity which entirely transcends it. Hence Mysticism, while it denies that God can be known, does not adopt this attitude because, in its view, the predicates of thought are really negative, not positive, and but express the nature of that which is wanting in the true characteristics of Being. For, though it denies that we can know God, *i.e.* can characterize Him by the partial and negative attributes applicable to the finite, it claims that man is not for ever shut out from God, as Agnosticism affirms, but, on the contrary, that when he is most truly himself, when he rises above the finite, he comes into direct communion with God. In God is all fulness: in Him

is no finiteness, no transitoriness, no division; and as man's real nature is to be one with God, it is only when he breaks through the limitations of his finite self—which include his self-opposing consciousness—that he experiences the Absolute. Thus in spirit Mysticism is just the reverse of Agnosticism; for, whereas the former turns away from all secular interests, and seeks to be filled with the divine, the latter concentrates itself upon the finite and positive, denying that the infinite can be brought within the circle of experience.

Now, the conception of the Infinite which I am seeking to defend agrees with Mysticism in maintaining that in communion with the divine man reaches the true consummation of his being, all other modes of consciousness being in various degree inadequate and relative, and in holding that such communion is no mere act of the intellect, but involves the response of the whole man. The fundamental distinction, on the other hand, between the two doctrines is, that whereas for Mysticism the world of nature, and even all the ordinary processes of knowledge and action, are condemned as finite, and therefore as beyond or beneath the sphere of the divine, Constructive Idealism maintains that not the most infinitesimal atom of matter or the faintest trace of feeling, not to speak of the fair creations of imaginative genius or the solid constructions of reflective thought, could possibly exist, were they not involved in the Infinite and supported by its continual presence and spiritual energy. It contends that a world divorced from God is impossible and inconceivable. Mysticism, separating the world from God, is forced to fall back upon analogy, vainly attempting, by heaping metaphor upon metaphor, to give an air of plausibility to the doctrine that, while God is absolutely complete in Himself apart from

## 438 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the world, the world is yet in some way dependent upon Him. In contrast to this essentially irrational doctrine, we maintain that the world is no arbitrary product of the divine nature, nor can it be held that God is complete in Himself independently of the world. All being manifests Him, and without that manifestation He could not be. There is no reality which can be called finite, in the sense of that which is separated from the infinite and exclusive of it. What we call the finite is a particular phase of the whole, viewed in its isolation, as if it could be without the whole; the finite, in other words, exists only for a knowing subject that has not yet learned what is really involved in its own experience. This, then, is one of the fundamental points in which we differ from the mystical view of the universe. Whereas the latter first extrudes the world from the Absolute, and then vainly seeks to restore it to its original source, Constructive Idealism claims that no device is needed to unite the finite to the Infinite, because they have never been, and cannot possibly be, separated. From all eternity and to all eternity, the world is the self-manifestation of the Divine, and their supposed separation is due to the dualistic modes of thought inevitable in us, with our immersion in the particular and our concentration on special tasks. With Mysticism we sympathize to this extent, that the first phase of the religious consciousness reveals to us the nullity of all earthly things when they are assumed to be self-complete, and the necessity of referring them to the infinite; but, on the other hand, we insist that, unless we employ our vision of the divine to illuminate and transform particulars, we lay ourselves open to the objection, that in seeking to honour the divine we really lower it by conceiving



## GOD AND THE WORLD

439

of it as shut out from that which has no being otherwise than in it. And there is another point in which we must dissent from Mysticism: God is not revealed to us in an ecstatic vision in which all distinctions, including even the distinction of subject and object, vanish away. This is a fatal misreading of a truth which, as properly interpreted, is of great importance and significance, the truth to which reference has already been made, that the religious consciousness involves the response of man's whole nature to the divine. For, while this is true, it is also true that the object of that consciousness exists only for a being who is capable of grasping the idea of the divine. Now, the idea of the divine, as we maintain, implies the consciousness of the ultimate principle which unifies all existence as manifesting itself in and through our self-consciousness, which itself is possible only in and through the consciousness of the world. Hence, if it were possible for us to transcend the distinction of self and not-self, as the mystic affirms, we should at the same time destroy the consciousness of the divine as the unity which comprehends both. It is not true that the religious consciousness at its highest degree of intensity extinguishes the light of reason; on the contrary, just in proportion to its intensity is our consciousness of the unity of the world, the self, and God. What misleads the mystic is, that, by the upward movement of reason, especially when it assumes an intuitive or unreflective form, we may finally reach a point where, as in a vision, we see all things illuminated and merged in the unity of the whole though without losing their distinction. So engrossed is the mystic in the consciousness of the divine, that he loses sight of its manifestations, and thus confuses

## 440 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the absence of all abrupt contrasts with the elimination of all distinctions. But, while the religious consciousness, like the higher forms of the artistic consciousness, denies the validity of all insoluble contradictions, it by no means dissolves reality in a vague and indefinite being of which nothing can be said but that it is ; on the contrary, it has the most vivid perception of the world, the self, and God, but of the world as inseparable from the self, and of both as real only in God. Now, this is the truth upon which Constructive Idealism insists ; maintaining that, just as in its personal form religion is the concrete and well-defined consciousness of God, so the philosophy of religion explicitly states the rational process implied in the ascent from the world to the self, and from the self to God, pointing out that the conceptions by which in our thought we characterize the objects of our experience are but the stages by which we advance to the ultimate conception of the universe as in all its phases the self-revelation of God.

It may seem, however, that in refusing to admit the separation of God from the world and the self, we have only escaped the defects of Mysticism by falling into Pantheism. If the finite has no independent reality, but is in the last analysis a phase or aspect of the infinite, must we not hold that only God is, and therefore that all other beings, including ourselves, are but modes of the one and only Being ?

Before attempting to answer this question directly, let us make clear to ourselves the distinction between Mysticism and Pantheism. The most perfect philosophical formulation of Pantheism is that given by Spinoza. Thought and extension—or in more recent terminology, nature and mind—are denied by Spinoza



## GOD AND THE WORLD

441

to have any separate and independent existence. There cannot be, as he argues, more than one self-complete and self-dependent Being, and this Being alone can properly be said to have substantial or independent existence. The assumed independence of the external world and finite minds is therefore denied, and it is affirmed that the totality of finite objects and of finite minds have no reality in themselves, but exist only as modes of the divine attributes of thought and extension. Each of these attributes, as Spinoza tells us, is infinite; and if it is objected that there cannot be two infinites, he answers that there is nothing inconceivable in the idea of two infinites, provided each is regarded as infinite in its own kind. Now, extension and thought are of this character. Thought, as he maintains, does not limit extension, or extension thought, and therefore there is nothing to prevent us from holding the infinity at once of extension and thought. What Spinoza is here insisting upon is the inseparability in the Absolute of thought and being, nature and mind. He argues that, if extension is denied of the infinite, we must also deny thought of it, since the one is essentially correlative to the other. Thought exists only as the thinking of extension, and therefore to deny the reality of either is to deny the reality of the other. The infinite, then, is infinite, both in thought and extension. The difficulty, however, arises, that if thought and extension are mutually exclusive, it seems impossible to maintain the unity of God. Spinoza's answer is, that each completely expresses the infinite; a solution which is either merely verbal, or which only covers over a fundamental dualism in the divine nature. When we turn from the unity of the whole to the distinction of the parts, we have to observe that the seeming independence of these is an illusion. The

## 442 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

essence of all external things is extension, and extension cannot mark off one thing from another, since it has in itself no parts, being absolutely continuous. It is imagination which pictures extended beings as if they were independent and complete, whereas the moment we think them as they really are we see that they cannot exist in separation from one another. And the same line of argument shows that ideas are not really separable, but constitute an unbroken chain. It is imagination that represents them as separate units. All so-called finite things and finite minds are really modes of extension and thought, the two attributes of the Absolute known to us. The finite is no doubt real, but it is not real in itself, but only in the infinite:

- it is, in fact, the infinite as arbitrarily limited by the imagination and given a factitious independence. This principle is applied in the most thoroughgoing way by Spinoza, not only in explanation of nature, but of human life: so that for him religion consists in viewing our physical and spiritual being as having no reality,
- except as parts of the whole.

As we may readily see from the summary of Spinoza just given, there is a marked distinction between Mysticism and Pantheism, due to a fundamental difference in their attitude to the universe. The God of Mysticism transcends the world as far as the infinite transcends the finite; the God of Pantheism is immanent in the world, or rather the world is immanent in Him. It is just because the mystic conceives of the world as essentially partial and limited, that he refuses to admit that the Infinite is contained in it. But Pantheism consists essentially in the doctrine that the finite as such has no reality, while yet it is real when it is viewed as it truly is, viz. as a phase of the Infinite, which is present in every part of

it, and in every part with equal fulness. Thus, while Mysticism turns away from the world, which it regards as finite, and therefore unreal, Pantheism finds in the finite the true reality, or rather it denies that the world is finite to one who truly comprehends it. Thus there is a twofold movement in Pantheism : that by which it takes away from the so-called finite its apparent independence, and that by which it reaffirms it as a phase of the Infinite. In Spinoza, the great representative of philosophical Pantheism, both these aspects are clearly stated ; for, on the one hand, he denies that the finite as such has any positive reality, and, on the other hand, he asserts that it is real as a phase in that totality of being which he calls Nature or God. Pantheism, therefore, does not, like Mysticism, turn away from the world of ordinary experience, to seek for the Absolute in a transcendent sphere ; it agrees with Agnosticism in seeking for the real within the realm of ordinary experience, and by the exercise of reason. Its contention is that when reason has done its perfect work, it becomes evident that the apparent independence of the finite is an illusion, due to the character of our imaginative faculty. Hence Spinoza maintains that, by the exercise of thought, we can discover the true nature of the Absolute in the world of our experience. Thus we are enabled to see that the whole material world is one form in which the one Unity is expressed, as the whole mental world is another form, in which it is equally expressed. If it is objected that this division destroys the undivided Unity of the whole, since it makes Matter and Mind co-ordinate, it is replied that these are distinctions, not separations ; and when the difficulty is pressed still more closely, the answer is made that in the Absolute they are identical, though the limitation of our thought forces us to

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account as unessential. Now, Constructive Idealism, while it agrees with Pantheism that matter and mind are both manifestations of the divine, denies that they manifest it in equal degree. The reason for this denial will be obvious, if we recall the steps by which the ascent is made from the first superficial view of reality, as a collection of particular things only externally related to one another, to the final conception of it as the self-manifestation of a Supreme Intelligence. The first step beyond the apparent independence of particular things is made by science, which brings to light the bonds by which they are related to one another in the single system of nature. The next step consists in revealing the organic unity of the world in the whole process of its development, a process which is inexplicable without the conception of the harmony of external nature with all beings that live. Beyond this stage we are now compelled to advance to a third by the presence in the universe of beings by whom all other forms of being are capable of being known, and in whom the rationality, working more obscurely in those forms, comes to self-consciousness. The last step of all is the comprehension of the whole as the expression of an absolutely rational principle. Now, it is plain from this summary that Constructive Idealism cannot admit that the Divine is expressed with the same degree of fulness in each of the stages mentioned; on the contrary, while man can never escape from the consciousness, implicit or explicit, of the divine principle which gives meaning to his experience, it is only when that principle is grasped in its complete and final manifestation that it reveals itself as self-conscious and rational. It is because Pantheism is contented with the first vague consciousness of the divine as the unifying principle of all modes of being, that it fails to determine

## 446 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

it as not merely a unity, but as self-conscious and rational. Constructive Idealism, on the other hand, clearly grasping the truth that the physical world has no independent being, but is merely a phase in the life of mind, refuses to see in it the final revelation of the divine ; and therefore it affirms that while the divine presupposes and manifests itself in the external world, its true nature is only disclosed in and to man, because he alone finds that in comprehending himself he is comprehending the ultimate principle of all that is. And therefore, in the second place, Constructive Idealism does not, like Pantheism, rob the finite of its reality, but maintains it, while reconciling it with the reality of the divine. This reconciliation it is able to effect by showing that true individuality does not consist in separation from all other reality, but in a self-activity which is realized through the comprehension and idealization of what at first seems opposed to it. Thus the most self-active form of knowledge does not consist in the contemplation of one's own separate being, but in the expansion of one's individuality over the widest area ; just as the highest self-activity in the form of practice consists in the widest possible sympathy and union with others. When this principle is clearly grasped, it becomes evident that neither by isolation from the world nor by absorption in the whole can true individuality be realized ; but that the intensest individual life is only possible in and through the completest transcendence of abstract personality. The Christian principle, " Die to live," may thus be taken as a universal formula, applicable not merely to the moral and spiritual life, but expressing as well the principle of knowledge. And this is the principle that must be applied in determination of the divine nature, which must be conceived, not as self-centred and self-



## GOD AND THE WORLD

447

enclosed, but as pouring itself forth in infinite prodigality in every element of the universe, and in this absolute self-surrender realizing its own absolute personality.

I think this is the authentic sign and seal  
Of Godship, that it ever waxes glad,  
And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts  
Into a rage to suffer for mankind,  
And recommence at sorrow: drops like seed  
After the blossom, ultimate of all.  
Say, does the seed scorn earth and seek the sun?  
Surely it has no other end and aim,  
Than to drop, once more die into the ground,  
Taste cold, and darkness, and oblivion there:  
And thence rise, tree-like grow through pain to joy,  
More joy and most joy,—do man good again.

## LECTURE SEVENTEENTH

### GOD AND MAN

IN my last lecture I tried to free the idea of God from certain one-sided views which destroy its purity and lead to insoluble contradictions ; in the present lecture I propose to consider the relation of man to God, dealing more particularly with the problem of evil, as apparently in absolute antagonism to a Being who is infinite in holiness as well as in knowledge and power and incapable of being transcended. In seeking for a solution of this problem, it will be convenient to consider the different views of evil which follow from the Mystical and the Pantheistic conceptions of God, contrasting with them the doctrine which results from the conception to which we have been led as the result of our whole inquiry.

The fundamental mistake of Mysticism, as we have contended, is to turn away from the concrete wealth of the knowable world, seeking for true reality in a transcendent realm, into which no one can penetrate by the exercise of his ordinary faculties. The mystic is thus led to deny that God can be grasped by thought, and to fall back upon a super-rational intuition, in which the whole being is conceived to be so filled with the divine that no definitely articulated object is presented



to the mind. In the apprehension of the Infinite not only do all the ordinary distinctions of one object from another disappear, but even the most fundamental of all distinctions—that between the conscious subject and the object of his consciousness. In thus seeking to exalt the Infinite, Mysticism really empties it of all meaning; for with the removal of all definiteness, the ultimate Reality is identified with the abstraction of pure Being, an abstraction so utterly empty and dead, that it only differs from pure Nothing as the idea of unrealized or potential reality differs from the absence of all reality. And if the mystic finds in this emptiest and poorest of all abstractions an inexpressible wealth of meaning, that is only because he vaguely endows it with a mysterious depth and complexity which properly belongs only to an Infinite that stands at the opposite pole of thought, and is therefore absolutely concrete. God, in other words, is only comprehended as He truly is when it is seen that He is manifested in every element of the rich and varied universe; and this comprehension is possible for us only as we pass through the whole of the stages of knowledge, enriching our thought at each step in our upward progress.

The false separation of the Infinite and the finite, God and the world, which is the *πρᾶττον ψεῦδος* of Mysticism, could not but lead to an imperfect comprehension of human life, and especially to a false conception of the nature and relations of evil and goodness. In the case of the Christian mystics, who lived in the faith that God is Love, the doctrine was not allowed to do its perfect work; but even they do not display that impassioned devotion to the good of all which is the distinctive mark of the Christian consciousness in its integrity, and are prone to forget

## 450 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the evil of the world in the luxury of mystical contemplation. It is, however, in such a thinker as Plotinus that we can best see the inevitable consequences of separating the Infinite from the finite, and thus giving an apparent reality to the finite in its isolation. In his view the material world cannot, strictly speaking, be real ; for nothing is real but God. Now, a world that is thus opposed to the only true reality must necessarily be wanting in reality, and if we followed out the idea to its full logical consequences, we should even have to deny that it had reality in any sense whatever. But Plotinus was not prepared to convert the world into a pure illusion ; and hence he conceives of it as defective or partially unrealized being, in contradistinction from God, in whom there is no defect or unreality. The material world is therefore evil, because it is defective, or partially unreal. Now, it is to be observed that this characteristic attaches to matter absolutely : no possible process can convert it into good, because it is essentially defective. Here we come upon the fundamental defect of the whole doctrine. If the material world is infected with an insuperable limit, by no possibility can it be shown to be compatible with the existence of an infinitely perfect Being. We must therefore either deny that it proceeds from God, or maintain that God will not, or cannot, bring it into harmony with the good. Thus, by a curious irony, the mystic, in his eagerness to exalt the Infinite above the Finite, really degrades it.

But it is especially in relation to the higher life of man that this conception of matter as defect or negation shows its baneful influence. The earthly life is regarded as one in which a being, whose true life is in union with the absolute, is tied to a physical organism which, as a mode of matter, is essentially evil. On such a theory,

obviously, the only means by which the soul can be restored to its original union with the divine is by the suppression of all the natural desires ; since these are held to arise from the transference to finite objects of that intense longing after union with the Absolute which is the soul's true nature. Nothing less than the annihilation of these desires can bring satisfaction ; for the desires, as strivings after purely individual satisfaction, are diametrically opposed to the longing for absolute union with the whole. Thus, ultimate satisfaction can only come from complete separation of the soul from the body. On such a theory, practical morality, as concerned with the relations of men to one another, all of whom are equally imprisoned in a body, cannot be more than a stage towards that intellectual emancipation from all finite interests, which leads first to the pure contemplation of the Absolute, and finally to complete absorption in it through a mystical ecstasy. It is thus evident that the conception of matter as essentially evil must in the end lead to the annihilation of morality. When man has reached the goal of his efforts there is nothing left for him but to enjoy the bliss of absolute union with the divine. To return to the sphere of practical effort would be to lose the fruition of his efforts. Thus we have a form of religion which is at war with morality. For, morality consists essentially in the organization of the various interests by which men are enabled to turn nature into the means of realizing their ideals ; and in a theory which regards these interests as in contradiction to their true life, there is obviously no place for such organization.

When Plotinus tells us that the fall of man is the result of self-will, or the attempt to realize the purely individual self, he virtually admits that the material world is not evil in itself, but only becomes evil when it

## 452 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

is made the instrument for the realization of selfish ends. At the same time, he never gets rid of the false presupposition which leads him to conceive of matter as in essential antagonism to spirit. Unity, as he always assumes, is absolutely incompatible with difference. For this reason he is unable to see how the Infinite can manifest itself in the finite without losing its unity, or how the finite can come into harmony with the Infinite without being absorbed in it. In its present application, this preconception leads to the identification of self-will with the pursuit of definite ends. Thus, to seek for wealth or honour seems to Plotinus the same thing as self-seeking, because in striving after these objects the soul turns away from the only object in which it can find satisfaction. Now, with the elimination of all definite ends, it is obvious that all practical activity is made impossible ; and therefore we are not surprised that the true life of man is conceived to consist in pure contemplation, or even in the dissolution of all definite thought and immersion in an indefinable Absolute.

The ultimate reason for the negative conception of evil is no doubt the determination to preserve the absolute unity of the Infinite. If evil is something positive, it seems as if it must be attributed to God, with the result that His perfect goodness is denied. Hence an attempt is made to evade the difficulty by conceiving the finite as by its very nature evil, in so far as it is wanting in reality. It is not seen that the difficulty of reconciling partial reality with the existence of a Being who contains all reality within Himself is no whit easier than that of reconciling unqualified reality with it. That there is no need for such a device may perhaps be shown by asking how evil is to be explained on our view, that the world is a manifestation of God.

Now, as a matter of historical fact, the doctrine of Plotinus came into conflict with the fundamentally different conception of Christianity, with the result that the former was compelled to make way for the latter; and we may therefore be sure that it is a one-sided doctrine. In the *Confessions* of Augustine we have an account of the process by which he finally came to see that Neo-platonism could not afford final satisfaction. Through the influence of Neo-platonism it was made clear to him that the Manichaeian doctrine, which divides up the universe between two antagonistic powers, was utterly unsatisfactory, and he discerned that God is the source of all reality, and that only in union with Him is perfect blessedness. But as his experience deepened he found that, though Neo-platonism had freed him from the materialistic tendencies of Manichaeism, by revealing the spirituality of God, it had no insight into the central truth of Christianity, that the Word has been made flesh, and therefore that the spirit of God is present in humanity, even in its degradation.

Now, we have here a principle which throws a flood of light on the problem of evil. Plotinus virtually excludes from the divine influence all forms of being lower than man, and even all men who are unable to rise, through the refining influence of the beauty of nature and art, first to the ideal view of existence, and ultimately to the ecstatic vision of the Absolute One. Disguise it as he may from himself by his pictorial forms of expression, Plotinus cannot escape the charge of giving over all finite existence to the power of evil; and though he protests vigorously against the idea of fate or external necessity, he can only explain the influence of the Absolute on the world by the idea of a purely accidental

## 454 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

and irrational activity, which at bottom is the same thing. Now, if we refuse to admit that the universe in any of its parts is subject to chance, and maintain that whatever is must in some sense be in harmony with the divine nature, it is obvious that we can neither regard evil as an irresistible force acting in opposition to good, nor can we view it as a mere appearance or illusion, which disappears when we put ourselves at the point of view of the Absolute ; in other words, we can neither accept the mystical nor the pantheistic conception of evil. Enough has perhaps been said in regard to the former, but before attempting to give the only solution that seems to be satisfactory, it will be well to say a few words about the latter.

Neo-platonism, while affirming the sole reality of the Absolute, yet predicates a kind of independence of the finite, and even finds in it the explanation of evil. Pantheism, on the other hand, denies that the finite has any independent reality whatever, and therefore it consistently affirms that evil, as such, has no existence. The supposed reality of evil is due to the limited point of view of our ordinary consciousness, which gives an apparent independence to that which has no real independence. We are accustomed to regard the pictures of imagination as if they corresponded to reality, whereas they give to the part a seeming reality which disappears when we contemplate it from the point of view of the whole. Thus we picture, say, a candle burning in a vacuum, to use one of Spinoza's illustrations, and on the basis of this image we think of the candle as in itself a real thing. But, when we go on to *think* what we have thus *imagined*, it becomes obvious that a candle burning in a vacuum is impossible from the total

nature of the physical world. And the same thing, continues Spinoza, is true of our own actions. We have before our minds the idea of a volition, and limiting ourselves to it, we imagine that we, as individuals, originate our acts. But, in truth, every act implies a cause in the form of a motive, and therefore a purely self-determined act is an impossibility. Thus, it is argued, just as error or falsehood has no reality corresponding to it, so there is nothing in reality corresponding to evil. When we rise above the divisive, partial and deceptive point of view of the imagination, and contemplate all things from the point of view of the whole, or as Spinoza calls it, "under the form of eternity," we see that evil has no real existence. What is properly meant by evil is the limitation or negation which belongs to each part of the whole, when it is given an unreal and factitious independence. We must, therefore, in estimating the actions of ourselves or others, neither condemn nor approve them, but simply contemplate them in their relation to the whole. As Pope puts it :

"All discord, harmony not understood,  
All partial evil, universal good ;  
And, spite of pride, in erring nature's spite,  
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right."

Or, in the striking phrase of a recent writer : "Heaven's design can realize itself as effectively in Catiline or Borgia as in the scrupulous or innocent."<sup>1</sup> A finite self and a purely individual action, like other forms of the finite, is an illusion, and therefore it is only by reference to a standard which all men are supposed able to will that we speak of self-denial and selfishness; the truth being that, as compared with the infinite, no

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 202.

## 456 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

finite being is more or less perfect, but all are on the same level as equally necessary to the whole. "I confess I cannot understand," says Spinoza, "how spiritual beings express God more than the other creatures, for I know that between the finite and the infinite there is no proportion, and that the distinction between God and the most excellent of created things differs not a whit from the distinction between him and the lowest and meanest of them."<sup>1</sup>

The most obvious objection to this doctrine is that it contradicts itself. It asserts that "whatever is, is right," and yet it denies that from the point of view of the Absolute anything can be said to be in any sense higher or lower than anything else. Thus it maintains a form of Optimism which may just as well be called Pessimism ; for, when the distinction in quality between one thing and another, one act and another, is abolished, the assertion that the whole is good becomes meaningless. If all distinctions are, from the point of view of the finite, equally true and right, for "whatever is" might as well be substituted "whatever is not" without any alteration in the character of the whole. When it is said that the finite is an illusion, it is implied that this illusion has at least the reality of a subjective appearance. But the recognition that the finite is an illusion implies that we have somehow transcended the finite and comprehended the infinite. So far as the distinction of good and evil is concerned, this must mean that we are conscious of an absolute standard, by reference to which all the acts of finite beings are alike condemned. But the admission of this standard implies that, in virtue of our reason, we are not merely finite, but can comprehend the infinite ; and a being who can thus transcend the finite cannot

<sup>1</sup> Caird's *Essays in Literature and Philosophy*, ii., 380.

be merely a link in the chain of natural causation, but must be able to determine himself by a higher law. And when freedom is once admitted, we can no longer maintain that all beings are upon the same level, or that there is no distinction in kind between good and evil. The Pantheistic solution of the problem of evil is therefore no more satisfactory than the Mystical. As the latter virtually affirms the eternity of evil, and thus denies the possibility of good, so the former, in affirming the sole reality of good, destroys the possibility of evil. A true theory must maintain the reality of both.

The course of our discussion has made it clear that we can neither regard evil as an absolute limit, nor as a mere negation : it is not the former, because evil that cannot be transcended, by the very fact that it is eternal, becomes a mere brutal necessity, which cannot exist in a rational universe ; it is not the latter, because a pure negation is a mere fiction. We must, therefore, hold that evil exists in order to be overcome, and that in some sense it is inseparable from good. It is often supposed, that the absoluteness or perfection of the whole is incompatible with the independence and freedom of the parts. But such a conception of the whole evidently assumes that the only type of reality which can with consistency be maintained is that of an identity which excludes the self-activity of the parts. Such an assumption is surely indefensible. Even if we do not go beyond organized beings, we find a higher form of unity than that which is sought to be ascribed to the Absolute. In a living being, we cannot say that the whole is simply the sum of the parts : what we must say is, that each part contains the whole, and yet that the whole could not exist apart from the peculiar activity of the parts. And if this is true of organized

## 458 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

beings, it is true in a much higher sense of self-conscious or spiritual beings. We are accustomed to speak of society as an organism ; and the metaphor points to a truth which we are tempted to overlook ; for society is not a collection of separate individuals, but a whole, in which the self-activity of each is essential to the whole, while yet the principle of the whole is manifested in each. But, while society must be assimilated to an organism, it is more than an organism in this sense, that the principle of the whole must not only operate in each member, but each must *comprehend* the principle of the whole. No doubt it is the case that this comprehension exists in the different members of society in various degrees of distinctness ; but in any one who understands what citizenship means, it must exist in some form, however confused and even inconsistent that form may be. Now, we are surely entitled to apply to the ultimate principle of the whole universe the highest conception of unity of which we are capable ; and, therefore, while we must recognize that it is difficult, or even impossible, to bring to absolute clearness the conception of the Absolute, there can be no possible doubt that it is a self-conscious unity, manifested in and to self-conscious beings, each of whom can attain to self-consciousness only in so far as he comprehends the principle which is implied in all forms of being, but reveals its meaning explicitly only to rational beings. If this is admitted, it must also be admitted, as I think, that it is incompatible with the very possibility of self-consciousness in man, that he should start with a developed consciousness of the Absolute. The whole character of our experience shows us, that we rise to the consciousness of our unity with others only through the stress and conflict of an antagonism which at times is so extreme that it seems

to burst the spiritual bonds by which men are united in society. And indeed the freedom of man necessarily implies freedom to will evil, *i.e.* to seek for the realization of himself in that which is contradictory of his true nature. Here, then, as it seems to me, we have at once the explanation of evil and of its compatibility with the absolute perfection of God. There is no evil except for a rational being, who is capable of willing a good which he identifies with the absolute good, but which is in reality in antagonism to it. But, inasmuch as the possibility of willing this lower good is inseparable from the existence of free subjects, who only come to the clear consciousness of the higher through experience of the lower, it is just the high destiny of man and the infinite perfection of God, which make it inconceivable how there should be a universe, containing beings who realize what is the meaning of their own life and of the whole, unless those beings pass through the long and painful process by which the absolutely good is revealed as that which can overcome the deepest depths of evil. It is characteristic of Christianity that, while at times it has attached so much importance to the evil of which man is capable as to find it hard to believe in its overthrow, yet it has never faltered in the belief that evil must be capable of being overcome. Even Augustine, who realized with a perfect passion of conviction the depths of evil to which man may fall, maintained with equal assurance that it is but a transitional stage to a higher good. And I think we may say that the pessimistic tone of many of the literary men and thinkers of our own day is at bottom due more to the higher demands now made upon humanity, and a clearer perception of the obstacles still to be overcome, than to a belief in the deterioration of the race or real despair of its future. Thus, in a sense, pessimism

## 460 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

confirms the doctrine which I am trying to express, that only through an ever deeper realization of the depths of evil can man hope to rise to loftier heights of goodness. It was not the eighteenth century, with its narrow and philistine conception of life,

“The barren optimistic sophistries  
Of comfortable moles,”

that has done most to forward the reign of “peace on earth, goodwill to men,” but the nineteenth century, with its powerful practical optimism, sometimes expressing itself in terms of pessimism; and it is hardly too much to say that the height of optimism attained in any age is exactly correspondent to the depth of pessimism. The people and the individual who are most profoundly conscious of evil have also the highest ideal of human life, and therefore implicitly the most assured faith in the power of good to overcome it. How otherwise can we explain the impassioned warfare waged by the best minds of our day against everything that shows the least taint of cruelty or injustice? Without faith in the response of his fellows to what is deepest in them, no one would venture to arraign them of evil. And it is worthy of special consideration that practically all the voices which give expression to that self-criticism which is a distinctive mark of our time, attack the present social organism on the ground that it is not organic enough, but in some form overrides that impulse towards self-realization which is based upon the idea of a higher good. No theory truly formulates what is working so powerfully in our modern consciousness that does not conceive of evil as due to the imperfect conditions under which man must realize the principle which in God is already realized. A self-conscious

being, as Carlyle has told us, cannot be satisfied with anything less than the whole infinite universe ; and therefore it is not surprising that, living a life so narrowly limited in space and time, he should at first seek for his own good in violation of the claims of others. Hence the whole history of man is, in one point of view, a record of the process by which he gradually learns that the absolute good of which he is in search is not to be found in anything short of that divine life, which consists in the free subordination of his merely individual good to the good of the whole. Evil, then, is never willed simply as evil ; it appears at the time as the good of which a man is ever in search ; and when he is disillusioned by the experience that in it he has not found his good, the recoil upon himself brings to light the higher self, against which he has unwittingly been striving, under the idea that in the lower his permanent satisfaction was to be found. In the sense that man cannot permanently will what he clearly realizes to be incompatible with goodness, we may say that the source of evil lies in ignorance or the want of self-knowledge ; but in so speaking we must be careful to observe that to be ignorant of oneself is ultimately to be ignorant of the principle of all goodness, *i.e.* of God.

If this is at all a true account of evil, it is not difficult to see that the regeneration of humanity is only possible in so far as the spirit of God is immanent in man, and as man freely responds to it and identifies his own good with the good of all. It is important to insist upon both of these aspects of the truth, for the denial or unconsciousness of either must lead to a false conception of life. Unless the divine spirit is contained in the self-conscious life of man, all his strivings must be blind and abortive efforts to escape from the

## 462 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

iron chains of necessity. If the universe is not rational, and fitted to realize the rational life of man, by no possible effort can he find the good of which he is in search. But it is equally essential that man should freely surrender himself to the influence of the divine principle which is operative in him. It is for this reason, as I have argued, that man must be capable of self-will, *i.e.* of seeking his good in isolation from others, and therefore in violation of the promptings of that higher self-consciousness which is a witness to the true nature of things. A rational being cannot be forced to be good. He may, indeed, be made to conform externally to what is imposed upon him, but his will is not thereby turned to the good, but, on the contrary, it suffers a degradation from which it may be hard to recover. A free subject cannot be made good even by the power of omnipotence, and therefore the spiritual life is essentially a free and self-determined life. The self-revelation of God in and to man is correlative to man's free self-identification with God.

From these considerations we may learn wherein the process of regeneration consists. The acts of the individual must be his own; but, at the same time, the moral quality of his acts is determined by his total attitude towards the community of which he is a member. As morality consists in willing the good of all, evil is overcome just in so far as the individual views the guilt of all as his own guilt. For, by this supreme act of self-abnegation, self-will is cut at the root, and its place is filled by a will that wills the whole. Nor is it possible for anyone to separate himself from others, so as to isolate either the evil or the good he does. As St. Paul so clearly saw, the evil of one communicates a taint to all, just as the good of one

contributes to the perfection of the whole. On the other hand, the individual bears in himself the guilt of all, as he is uplifted by the good of all. And as man by his very nature is always seeking for complete realization, the process of his history is a continual triumph of the higher over the lower, carrying with it the elevation of the individual as well as of the race. At each stage of this process, it is true, there are individuals who fail to rise to the spiritual level of their time; and, indeed, one of the great problems of society is to bring them to the consciousness of what their true nature is; but, on the whole, man is in perpetual process towards the complete moralization of his will. Now, it is here that the character of the religious consciousness exercises its influence. Mysticism, as we find it in Plotinus, and even in Christian writers, gives a very inadequate support to the development of the moral consciousness, because it does not recognize, or at least does not sufficiently recognize, the essential identity of all men and the necessity of the complete development of human nature in all its aspects to the realization of that union with the divine which, in common with all the higher forms of religion, it asserts. Thus it leads to the over-estimation of the contemplative life, and even to the evaporation of religion in a super-rational ecstasy, which gives no aid in the uplifting of men as a whole, but at the most merely encourages a few choice spirits to indulge in the luxury of a refined spirituality.

Pantheism, again, tends to deaden the consciousness of moral evil, and therefore to encourage contentment with "whatever is." No doubt many whose theoretical creed is Pantheistic exhibit the strongest practical interest in the progress of society; but this only shows

## 464 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

that there may be a contrast between what a man thinks he believes and what actually rules his life. Where, as in ancient India, Pantheism was not a mere doctrine but a life, its fruits appeared in indifference to the wildest excesses of passion or in the conservation of immemorial customs. In contrast to Mysticism and Pantheism, Christianity is essentially the religion of humanity, and as such it forms the support and the justification of that warfare with the lower self which constitutes the essence of the moral consciousness. Nor can the moral consciousness in its highest form subsist apart from the religious consciousness, for the basis of morality ultimately is an ineradicable faith in the rationality of the universe. No doubt men may be moral, and may even live the self-sacrificing life demanded by Christianity, who are not able to reconcile to their intellect the Christian idea of the essential unity of man and God; but I think it may be said that the independence of morality on religion cannot be maintained by anyone who clearly recognizes that to separate morality from religion is to deny a principle and yet affirm its application. If morality is not the expression of an ideal based upon the true nature of things, how can it be maintained that moral progress is possible? Why may what is called progress not be a process which is in disharmony with the true nature of things, and but a useful expedient to secure a greater amount of individual pleasure? It thus seems to me that we cannot maintain the objective character of morality without basing it upon the ultimate nature of things as realized in God. This is the claim of Christianity, as I understand it; for Christianity refuses to separate the service of humanity from the service of God, or the service of God from the service of humanity. A love for man which is not inspired by

the faith that self-sacrifice is the very nature of the divine, can never issue in that audacity of enthusiasm by which men have been able to remove mountains, and a love of God which is purely contemplative, or expresses itself mainly in prescribed acts of adoration, will not enable men cheerfully to face and overcome the most unsightly and repellent forms of physical and moral evil.

The regeneration of humanity demands more than the removal of outward obstacles to progress: it demands the transformation of the evil will by the awakening of the higher or true self, the self which can find rest only in union with God; and such a renewal of humanity, which may well be called a "new birth," must necessarily be slow, and at times may seem to cease altogether, or even to move backward. It is an index of the nobility of man that his development is always self-development; and therefore no member of the whole can be allowed to remain in any respect unspiritualized. This various and complete realization of all the forms in which the self-conscious life is manifested has only in modern times been clearly recognized as the task of humanity, and its very complexity is apt to confuse and blind men to the great issues of life. Not least among the sources of perplexity are those intellectual differences which arise largely from the very intensity with which men devote themselves to some special task, with the result that they find it difficult to "see life steadily and see it whole"; and one of the main objects I have kept before me in these lectures has been to suggest a view of the relations of knowledge and faith, theory and practice, morality and religion, which shall not leave them in irreconcilable conflict, but shall indicate a way in which all the elements of human life may be reconciled

## **466 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION**

in the conception of a divine principle which manifests itself in every part of the universe, but predominantly in man, whose prerogative it is to realize ever more clearly that if in his first nature he is sunk in evil, his second nature is to be of kin with God.



## APPENDIX.

### I. BOOKS ON PHILO.

*Philonis Iudaei Opera Omnia.* 8 vols. Leipzig, 1880.

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creation as recorded in the Law, overshadowing with its splendour the souls of those who come in contact with it, will be displayed in smaller characters, when we have first set forth that which must not be passed over in silence.

§ 2. Some, admiring the beauty of the world rather than the Maker of the world, have declared it to be ungenerated and eternal; they have plainly and expressly maintained the false doctrine of the absolute inactivity of God, whereas they ought to have been filled with wonder at the power of God as its Maker and Father, instead of reverencing the world beyond due measure. But Moses, who had reached the very summit of philosophy, and had also learned from the oracles of God the great principles operative in nature, was by his insight into nature aware that there is necessarily in things an active and a passive principle, and that the active principle—the Reason of the whole—is perfectly pure and unmixed, being better than virtue, better than knowledge, and better than the absolutely good and the absolutely beautiful; while the passive principle, as without life and self-activity, is moved and shaped and animated by Reason, and thus transformed into an absolutely perfect product. Those who affirm the world to be ungenerated do not see that they are undermining what is most useful and most essential to piety, namely, the idea of Providence. For reason shows us that a father and a maker take care of that which has been produced. A father seeks to secure the continuance of his children, an artificer the continuance of what he has made; whatever is pernicious and hurtful he does his very best to remove, whatever is useful and advantageous he seeks by every means to provide. But that which is there of itself can excite no particular interest in him who has not produced it. That is a worthless and pernicious doctrine, which assimilates the world to an anarchic State, in which there is no head or ruler or judge, whose prerogative it is to administer and govern all things. Now, the great Moses, viewing the uncreated as entirely different in nature from

## 470 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

the visible world—for the whole visible world, as subject to process and change, is never the same in successive moments—has attributed eternity to that world which is invisible and grasped by thought as brother and kinsman, while he has appropriately spoken of the genesis of the sensible world. Since, then, our world is visible and sensible, it has also of necessity been created. There was therefore good reason for giving an account of its genesis, and in doing so Moses has shown himself to be a cosmologist of the most reverential spirit.

§ 3. Moses says that the world was constructed in six days; not that the Creator had need of a length of time—for it is fitting that God should do all things at once, not only by His command, but by His mere thought,—but because what was created must also be ordered. Now, number is characteristic of order, and by the laws of nature six is the most productive of numbers. For, after the *unit*, it is the first perfect number, being equal in its parts, and being completed from them—*three* being *one-half* of six, *two one-third*, *one one-sixth*. Moreover, *six* is by nature, as it were, male and female, and unites in itself the power of each. For, in existing things the *odd* is *male*, and the *even* is *female*; but three is the first of odd numbers, two of even numbers, and six is the product of both. And the world, being the most perfect of created things, must be constructed according to a perfect number, viz. six; and, as it was to have in itself the generation of things from the conjunction of male and female numbers, it must contain the imprint of the first mixed number which is at once odd and even, since it was to embrace the species of the male which sows the seed and the female which is receptive of the seed.

§ 4. To each of the days, with the exclusion of the first, there is allotted one of the parts of the whole. Moses does not speak of the 'first' day, lest it should be numbered along with the others, but appropriately calls it 'one day,' seeing in and ascribing to it the nature and designation of *unity*.

Now, we must state as far as possible what is contained in it ; for it is impossible to deal with all that it contains, since it embraces the higher or intelligible world, as the account of it shows. For God, because He is God, knew beforehand that there can be no beautiful image without a beautiful model, nor any faultless sensible object which has not been fashioned after an archetype and idea grasped by reason ; and therefore, when He had determined to construct this visible world of ours, He produced beforehand the intelligible world, in order that, by using the incorporeal and god-like model, He might fashion the corporeal world, as a younger image of the older, containing as many sensible genera as there are intelligible genera in the ideal world.

§ 5. Just as the idea of a city which he proposes to construct has no existence in space, but is stamped upon the soul of the architect : so the intelligible world can have no other place than the divine Reason (*λόγος*), which gives order to the various ideas. For what other place can there be for the divine powers, which is capable of receiving and containing, I do not say all the powers, but any one of them in its purity ?

§ 6. It is also a divine power which has formed the world, a power which has its source in absolute goodness. For if it is asked why this world has been made, I think we shall not err if we answer, with one of the ancients, that 'the Father and Maker is good, and does not grudge to impart something of His own nature to matter, which in itself possesses nothing good, but is capable of becoming all things. For matter in its primitive state was without order, without quality, without life, and full of instability, disorder and disharmony ; but it has been changed and transformed into the opposite and best,—the well-ordered, harmonious,—in a word, whatever is characteristic of the higher nature. God Himself, incited by no adviser—for what other Being was there?—was minded to bestow rich and unlimited favours upon that which, without the divine grace, could obtain no good thing. But He has

## 472 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

endowed it, not in proportion to the greatness of His own grace, which is infinite and eternal, but in proportion to the receptive power of the things upon which His grace is bestowed. For that which is made is not fit to receive all that God is willing to bestow, since His powers transcend all measure; and the creature, being too weak to receive the divine grace in its fulness, would have sunk exhausted, had not God measured His bounty, allotting duly the portion which fell to each.

To speak more plainly, the intelligible world is nothing but the Thought (*λόγος*) of God, or God as creating the world, just as the ideal city is nothing but the thought (*λογισμός*) of the architect, or the architect as conceiving in his mind the city which is to be built. This is the teaching of Moses, not mine. In giving an account of the origin of man, he expressly says, that man was 'formed after the image of God.' Now, if the part is an image of an image, manifestly the whole 'form,' this total sensible world of ours, which is greater than man's image, must be a copy of the divine image. And it is further evident, that the archetypal seal, which we call the intelligible world, must be the archetypal pattern, the idea of ideas, the Reason (*λόγος*) of God.

§ 7. It is said that 'in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth'; meaning by 'beginning,' not a beginning in time, as some imagine; for before the origination of the world time was not, but it has come into being either with the world or after it. For, as time is an interval in the movement of the heavens, there could be no movement prior to that which was moved, but movement must have been instituted either later than, or simultaneously with, the origin of the heavens; hence, time must have come into being contemporaneously with the world, or posterior to it. To assert that time is older than the world is therefore rash and unphilosophical. Now, if by the 'beginning' is not meant the beginning in time, we must conclude that what is affirmed is the beginning in number; so that 'in the beginning God made' is equivalent

to 'God made the heavens first.' And in truth it is proper to say that heaven came into being 'first,' because it is the highest of all created things, and consists of the purest species of substance, since it was to be the most holy abode both of invisible and of visible gods. And if the Creator made all things at once, still things made beautifully none the less possessed order; for nothing is beautiful that is without order. Now, order is the consequence and connexion of things which precede and follow one another, if not in actual fact, at least in the mind of him who fashions them; for only so will they be determinate, stable in their nature, and free from confusion. In the intelligible world, then, the Creator made the incorporeal heavens and the invisible earth and the form of air and of empty space. The former he called 'darkness,' because air is by nature black; the latter the 'deep' because empty space is exceedingly deep and immeasurable. Next He made the incorporeal substance of water and 'spirit' (*πνεῦμα*); seventh, and last of all, the substance of light, which also was incorporeal, being the ideal pattern of the sun and of all the light-bearing stars which were to be fixed in the heavens.

## 2. EXTRACTS FROM OTHER WRITINGS OF PHILO.

A.—II. 654. The divine realm is truly untrodden and inaccessible, nor is the purest intelligence able to ascend even to such a height as merely to touch it. It is impossible for man to have a direct vision of the self-existent Being. When it is said that man cannot see the 'face' of God, this is not to be taken literally, but is a figurative way of indicating that the self-existent Being is absolutely pure and unmixed, the specific nature and form of man being best known by his 'face.' For God does not say, 'I am by nature invisible'—for who can be more visible than He who has originated all other visible things?—but He says, 'Though I am by nature visible, no man hath seen me.' And the cause lies in the

## 474 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

weakness of the creature. To speak plainly, we must become God—which is impossible—before we can comprehend God.—I. 258. In Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, we read: “Behold, behold that I am, and there is no God beside me.” Now here God does not say, “Behold Me”—for it is impossible for the creature at all to comprehend God in His inner being—but, “Behold that I *am*,” *i.e.* contemplate my existence; for it is enough for human reason to attain to the knowledge that there is and exists a Cause of the universe, and any attempt to go further and discover the essence or determinate nature of this Cause is the source of all folly. When Moses asked by what name he should designate the Being who sent him, the divine answer was (Exod. iii. 14): “I am he who *is*” (*Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὄν*); which was equivalent to, “It is my nature to be, not to be named” (*εἰναι πέφυκα, οὐ λέγεσθαι*).—I. 53. He who thinks that God has qualities, or that He is not one, or is not uncreated and imperishable, or is not immutable, injures himself, not God.—I. 181. It is impious to suppose that there is anything higher than the Cause of all things, since nothing is equal to Him, nothing a little lower, but everything after God is found to have descended by a whole genus.—II. 191. God must be conceived as the uncreated and eternal Cause of all things.—I. 229. Though He exists outside of creation, God has none the less filled the world with Himself.

B.—II. 154. The *λόγος* is two-fold in the universe and in the nature of man. In the universe there is, on the one hand, the *λόγος* which has to do with the incorporeal and archetypal ideas constituting the intelligible cosmos, and, on the other hand, the *λόγος* which is concerned with visible things,—these being copies and imitations of the ideas from which this visible cosmos has been fashioned. In man, again, there is, on the one hand, the *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος* (inner reason) and, on the other hand, the *λόγος προφορικός* (outer reason). The former is like a fountain, the latter, *i.e.* the expressed *λόγος*, is like the stream which flows forth from it. The

one is situated in the ruling part; the other—that which is expressed—is in the tongue and mouth and the other organs of speech. . . . Two virtues have been assigned to it, *expression* and *truth*; for the *λόγος* of nature is true and expressive of all things, and the *λόγος* of the wise man, imitating the *λόγος* of nature, ought to be absolutely incapable of falsehood; it ought to honour truth, and obscure nothing the knowledge of which can benefit those instructed by it. Not but what there have been assigned to the two forms of the *λόγος* in us two appropriate virtues; to the *λόγος* *ἐποφορικός* the virtue of *expression*, and to the *λόγος* in the mind the virtue of *truth*; for it is not fitting that the mind should accept anything false, or that speech should be a hindrance to the most precise expression of truth.—I. 161. God is *cause*, not *instrument*. Whatever comes into being is produced *by means of* an instrument, but *by* the cause of all things. In the production of anything there must co-operate (1) that *by which* it is made, (2) that *from which* it is made, (3) that *through which* it is made, (4) that *on account of which* it is made; in other words, the ‘cause,’ the ‘matter,’ the ‘instrument,’ the ‘reason’ or ‘purpose.’ Thus, in the production of a house, or a whole city, there must co-operate (1) the architect, (2) the stones and timber, (3) the instruments. Now, the architect is the cause *by which* the house is made, the stones and timber are the ‘matter’ *from which* the building is made, the instruments are the things *through which* it is made, and the *reason why* it is made is to afford shelter and protection. Passing from particular things, look at the production of that greatest of all edifices or cities, the world, and you will find that God is the cause by whom it has been produced, that the ‘matter’ is the four elements out of which it has been composed, that the instrument is the *λόγος* of God through which it has been formed, and that the reason of its existence is the goodness of the Creator.—I. 502. The *λόγος* is neither unbegotten as God, nor begotten as man.

## 476 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

C.—I. 414. The *λόγος* is the eldest Son of God—I. 308. The *λόγος* is the first-born Son of God—I. 562. The eldest *λόγος* of the self-existent Being puts on the cosmos as a garment, for it arrays itself in earth and water and air and fire and their products, as the individual soul is clothed with the body, and the mind of the wise man with the virtues. . . . The *λόγος* of the self-existent Being is the bond of the universe, which holds together and closely unites all its parts, preventing them from being loosened and separated.—I. 298. Once Greece flourished, but the Macedonians deprived it of its authority. Then Macedonia had its period of bloom, but it was gradually dismembered, and finally lost its power. Prior to the Macedonians the Persians were prosperous, but in a single day their vast and mighty kingdom was overthrown. And now the Parthians are more powerful than the Persians, who but the other day were their masters. Egypt once had a long and glorious career, but like a cloud its dominion has passed away. Where are the Ethiopians, where Carthage and Libya? Where are the Kings of the Pontus? What has

$\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$ , since the God prior to the  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$  is higher than every rational nature, and it was not lawful for any created being to be made like to Him who is above reason.

D.—I. 502. The Father has given to the  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$  the privilege of standing between the Creator and that which He has made. And this same  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$  is a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the afflicted race of mankind.—I. 270, 562. The  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$  is the high priest, who mediates between God and man; who is not to be defiled by touching the corpse of his father, i.e. the spirit, or of his mother, i.e. the sense.—I. 121-2. The  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$  is the manna; for Moses said to the people, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat" (Exod. xvi. 13). . . . The soul is taught by the prophet Moses, who tells it: "This is the bread, the food which God has given for the soul, explaining that God has brought it, His own Word and Reason; for this bread which He has given us to eat is this Word of His." . . . Let God enjoin the soul, saying to it, that "man shall not live by bread alone," speaking in a figure, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—I. 560. Moses exhorts him who is sufficiently swift of foot to press on without taking breath to the supreme  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$  of God, which is the fountain of wisdom, in order that, by drinking of that stream, he may find everlasting life.—I. 504. The soul has three parts, and each of these parts is divided into two; as six parts thus arise, the seventh, which is the holy and divine  $\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$ , is fitly regarded as the divider (*ρομένος*) of the whole.—I. 491. Each of the three victims (the heifer, the ram and the goat) he divided in the middle (Exod. xxxix. 3); the soul into rational and irrational, speech into true and false, sensation into definite and indefinite; and these divisions he placed opposite to each other, rational to irrational, true to false, definite to indefinite, leaving the birds (turtle-dove and pigeon) undisturbed. For the incorporeal and divine sciences cannot be divided into opposites at variance with each other.—I. 82. The 'rock cut away at the top' (Deut. viii. 15) is the wisdom

## 478 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

of God, which He cut as topmost, first of all from His own powers, and from which He gives drink to souls that love God.

E.—I. 456. In Gen. xxvi. 5 we are told that Abraham 'kept all the Law of God.' Now, the Law (*νόμος*) is nothing but the Divine Word (*λόγος*), which commands what ought to be done, and forbids what ought not to be done; as scripture bears witness when it says, 'he received the Law from His words' (Deut. xxxiii. 4). If, then, the Word of God is the Law of God, and the righteous man keeps the Law, he also perfectly keeps the Word; so that, as scripture says, the actions of the wise man are the words of God.—

II. 452. Men who are under the dominion of anger, or desire, or any other passion, or of intentional wickedness, are complete slaves, while those who love the Law are free. For the Law is unerring, right reason; it is not made by this or that man, being no transitory law of mortals, written on parchments or engraved on columns, the lifeless on the lifeless, but an eternal law stamped by the immortal nature on the immortal mind.—II. 195. The *λόγος* convinces of guilt; it is the *έλεγχος*, which dwells in and is inseparable from each soul: refusing to accept what is wrong, it always preserves its nature as a hater of evil and lover of virtue, being itself at once accuser and judge.

F.—I. 35. Every man in his reason is connected with the divine *λόγος*, being an ectype, or fragment, or spark of that blessed nature, while in the structure of his body he is connected with the rest of the world.—II. 367. A thousand things escape from and elude the human mind, because it is entangled in so great a crowd of impressions, which seduce and deceive it by false opinions. Thus the soul may be said to be buried in a mortal body, which may be called its tomb.—I. 266. It is possible for the Divine Spirit to dwell in the soul, but not to take up its permanent abode there. And why should we wonder at this? For there is nothing in this world the possession of which is stable and enduring,

but mortal affairs are continually wavering in the balance, now inclining to one side and then to the other, and liable to perpetual alternations. The greatest cause of our ignorance is the flesh (*σάρξ*) and our connexion with the flesh. With this agrees the saying of Moses: because 'they are flesh, the Divine Spirit' is not able to abide in them. . . . Nor does anything so impede the growth of the soul as the fleshy nature. This is the first and main foundation of ignorance and want of understanding.—I. 372. So long as our irrational desires were not excited and did not cry out, our reason was established with some firmness; but when they began to fill the soul with their discordant cries, calling out and awakening the passions, they led to insurrection and strife.

G.—I. 203. Abraham confessed that virtue without the grace of God is of no avail.—I. 662. We must never imagine that we are ourselves able to wash and cleanse a life full of stains without the grace of God.—I. 302. As milk is the food of babes, and wheat-cakes the food of men, so the soul must have a milk-like nourishment in its age of childhood, viz. the rudiments of education, while the nourishment adapted to men are the precepts of wisdom, temperance and the other virtues.

### III. EXTRACT FROM THE SEPTUAGINT: GEN. I.

2. Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἄδρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς
3. ἀβύσσου· καὶ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος.
4. Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεὸς, Γενηθήτω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς. Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ φῶς, ὅτι καλόν· καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ Θεὸς
5. ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ φωτὸς, καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σκότους. Καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ φῶς ἡμέραν, καὶ τὸ σκότος ἐκάλεσε
- νύκτα· καὶ ἐγένετο ἡσπέρα, καὶ ἐγένετο πρωΐ, ἡμέρα μία.
26. Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεὸς, Ποιήσωμεν ἀνθρώπους κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὅμοίωσιν.

## INDEX.

Abelard and Aquinas, 381.  
*Acts of Thomas*, 294-6.  
Agnosticism, 39, 431 *sæc.*  
Allegorical method, 198-200, 206-7,  
217, 233-4, 265-6, 313, 351.  
Ambrose, Influence of, on Augus-  
tine, 312-3.  
Ambrose and Neo-platonism, 330.  
Ammonius Saccas, 316.  
Anaxagoras, Allegorical method of,  
199.  
Ansba and Aquinas, 367, 377, 381.

Augustine and Aquinas, 360, 378,  
388.  
Augustine and Luther, 362.  
Augustine and Leibnitz, 419.  
Aurelius, Influence of, 322.  
Authority, Principle of, 6, 8, 9, 17,  
22-42, 46-7, 367 *sæc.*, 431.

Basilides, Philosophy of, 270-29.  
Bayle and Leibnitz, 409 *sæc.*  
Berkeley and Personal Idealism,  
107.



## INDEX

481

- Causality and Creation, 130.  
Cerinthus, Doctrine of, 260-3.  
Change and permanence, 128-130.  
Christianity, Historical relations of, 6-8, 14, 39, 178, 187-9, 252-6, 263, 264-7, 288-9, 302, 316, 323 seq., 404 seq., 453.  
Christianity independent of Authority, 36-7.  
Christianity indestructible in principle, 45.  
Christianity, Harnack's idea of, 165-192.  
Christianity and Natural Theology, 405 seq.  
Christianity, Idea of God in, 431.  
Christianity, Ethics of, 446, 464.  
Christianity and Idealism, 457 seq.  
Christology, Augustine's, 326, 344 seq., 350, 453.  
Christology, Thomas Aquinas', 387 seq.  
Church, Authority of the, 6, 9, 17, 23-47, 351, 365, 370.  
Church and State, 390 seq.  
Clement of Alexandria, Theology of, 272.  
Consciousness, "Subliminal," 150-8.  
Contradiction, Principle of, 420.  
Copernicus and Modern thought, 51.  
Creation and experience, 129-130.  
Creation, doctrine of, 336 seq., 340, 356, 380, 415.  
  
Dante, on doubt, 35.  
Descartes and Augustine, 327.  
Descartes and Luther, 398.  
Descartes, Finite and Infinite in, 403.  
Descartes and Spinoza, 403.  
Descartes and Leibnitz, 421.  
Desire, Relation of, to reason, 96.  
Development of doctrine, 9-48.  
Development, Historical, 347.  
Docetism, 257.  
Dogma, Idea of, 6-48, 165-192, 367, 372.  
Dualism, Medieval, 14, 39.  
Dualism, Kant's refutation of, 75.  
  
Ebionites, Doctrine of the, 261-2.  
Ecstasy, Doctrine of, 202-3, 317, 321, 451-453.  
Emanation, Doctrine of, 317-320.  
  
Emerson, on Truth, 39.  
Empiricism, Influence of, 101-2.  
Engratites, Doctrine of the, 257.  
Epicureanism, Ethics of, 315.  
Epiphanes, Doctrine of, 258.  
Essenes, Doctrines of the, 257.  
Ethics of Stoics, 315.  
Ethics of Epicureans, 315.  
Ethics of Plotinus, 320-1, 450.  
Ethics of Aquinas, 375.  
Evil, Doctrine of, 211, 230 seq., 242, 324, 341, 358 seq., 383 seq., 402, 409 seq., 449 seq.  
Experience and reality, 61 seq., 151-8.  
  
Faith, Doctrine of, 10-23, 42, 83 seq., 146-7, 326, 370, 409.  
Freedom, Idea of, 56 seq., 74, 89-98, 101, 130, 341 seq., 413 seq.  
  
Genius, Authority of, 25, 29, 33, 35-6.  
Gnosticism, Relation of, to Christianity, 39, 251-7.  
Gnosticism, Forms of, 257-298.  
Gnosticism and Greek Philosophy, 264.  
Gnosticism and Scripture, 265-6.  
Gnosticism, Relation of, to Philo, 265-9, 273.  
Gnosticism and the Church, 267, 292.  
Gnosticism, Theology of, 268-292.  
Gnosticism, and Spinoza, 269.  
Gnosticism, Conception of evil in, 278-293.  
Gnosticism, Conception of "aeons" in, 278-9.  
Gnosticism, Ethics of, 292-8.  
Gnosticism, Relation of, to Plotinus, 317, 320.  
God, Knowledge of, 18-21, 131-4.  
God, Proofs of existence of, 53-55, 70-5, 89-91, 97-8, 203-5, 218, 377 seq.  
God, Idea of, 98-113, 130-4, 168, 174-7, 204-7, 210-12, 214-221, 226-7, 242-4, 268-278, 323 seq., 353 seq., 368 seq., 409 seq., 431 seq.  
Goethe, on development, 14.  
Gospel, Fourth, and philosophy, 6.  
Gospel, Authorship of, 178.  
Gospel and Philo, 195, 236-7, 242-3.

## INDEX

Gospel, "Logos" of, 195, 245-7.  
 Gospel, Idea of God in, 243-4.  
 Gospel and Christianity, 253.  
 Gospel and Neo-platonism, 322.  
 Grace, Doctrine of, 345 seq., 360, 415.  
 Green, T. H., Philosophy of, 139-140.  
 Hamilton, Sir Wm., 102, 243.  
 Harnack and Loisy, 42-5.  
 Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums* of, 165-192.  
 Harnack, on Nillenizing of N.T., 235-6.  
 Harnack, on Pauline Theology, 238-240.  
 Hecataeus, Allegorical method of, 199.  
 Hegel's idea of religion, 45.  
 Hegel's Criticism of Kant, 139.  
 Hegel's Comment on "intuition," 155.  
 Hildebrand and the papal theory, 367.  
 Hippolytus, on Basilides, 270-1, 281-2, 284-5, 287-90.  
 Hume's theory of knowledge, 59.  
 Hypotheses, W. James on, 144-5.  
 Iamblichus, Philosophy of, 323.  
 Idea, content and image, 109, 113-115, 123-4.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and the Critical philosophy, 100-1.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and Personal, 102-113, 136-7.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and the New Realism, 113-137.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and Pantheism, 135, 440 seq., 454 seq.  
 Idealism, Speculative, Idea of God in, 430, 456 seq.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and Agnosticism, 431 seq.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and Pluralism, 433.  
 Idealism, Speculative, and Mysticism, 434 seq., 457.  
 Idealism, Speculative, Idea of evil in, 452 seq.  
 Idealism, Speculative, Relation of to Christianity, 457 seq.  
 Idealism, Speculative, Theory of redemption of, 462.

Immortality, Problem of, 53-5, 70-1, 89-91.  
 Incarnation, Doctrine of, 326, 412.  
 Infinite and finite, 16-21, 23-4, 98, 134, 402, 460.  
 Intellect and will, 374.  
 Irenaeus, on the Gnostics, 251, 254-6, 261.  
 James, W., Relation of, to Harnack, 137.  
 James, W., Pragmatism of, 141-9, 158-164.  
 James, W., *Varieties of Religious Experience* of, 149-158.  
 Jesus Christ, Authority of, 25.  
 Jesus Christ, Self-consciousness of, 37, 40-1.  
 Jesus Christ, Harnack's view of, 178-190.  
 Jesus Christ, Basilides' view of, 291.  
 Jesus Christ, Mani's view of, 306.  
 Jesus Christ, Augustine's view of, 326, 344 seq., 350, 453.  
 Jesus Christ, Aquinas' view of, 387 seq.  
 Jowett, B., on religious scepticism, 172.  
 Judaism, Later, 265-6.  
 Judaism, and Calvinism, 434.  
 Kant, Influence of, 50.  
 Kant, Problem of, 54-6.  
 Kant, Defence of Freedom, immortality and God, 56-101.  
 Kant, Relation of recent philosophy to, 75.  
 Kant and Aquinas, 377.  
 Knowledge of Infinite, 17-23, 131-5.  
 Knowledge, Critical Theory of, 58-84.  
 Knowledge, Hume's theory of, 59-60.  
 Knowledge and faith, 83-88, 370.  
 Laplace, on idea of God, 53.  
 Law, Natural, 50-5, 90-1.  
 Law, Jewish, 228-30, 249.  
 Leibnitz and Personal Idealism, 107.  
 Leibnitz, Théodicée of, 400 seq.  
 Lewes, G. H., Idea of Philosophy of, 49-50.  
 Lightfoot, on the Essenes, 257 n.  
 Logos, Doctrine of the, 195, 221-230, 245-9, 412.



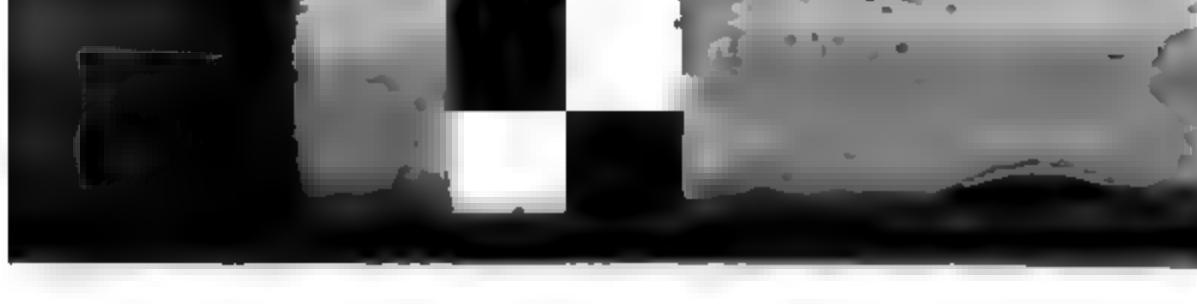
## INDEX

483

- Loisy, Abbé, Defence of Authority by, 40-7.  
Lotze, Influence of, 101.  
Lotze and Kant, 166.  
Luther and Descartes, 399.
- Man and nature, 50-8, 67, 93, 373.  
Man, Freedom of, 67-8, 374.  
Man as moral being, 68-9, 93-7.  
Man, Immortality of, 70-5.  
Man and God, 452.  
Man and Infinite, 460.  
Manichaeism, Origin of, 301-2.  
Manichaeism and Christianity, 302-3.  
Manichaeism, Doctrines of, 303-7.  
Manichaeism, Augustine's relation to, 307-8, 313, 334, 358, 361, 453.  
Manichaeism and Neo-platonism, 323.  
Manichaeism, Leibnitz' criticism of, 411.  
Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought*, 21, 102.  
Marcion's view of O.T., 27.  
Mathematics, Philosophy of, 58-60, 114, 121-7.  
Matter, Idea of, 86-8, 201-5, 209-10, 218, 320, 450.  
Melanchthon, *Loci* of, 400.  
Mellone, S. H., on Newman, 9.  
Metrodorus, Allegorical method of, 199.  
Middle Ages, Character of, 51-2, 362 seq., 389, 395 seq.  
Mind, Idea of, 86-8.  
Monism and Personal Idealism, 105-6.  
Monotheism of Plato and Aristotle, 264, 315.  
Morality and religion, 68-94, 146, 448 seq.  
Myers, F., Defects of, 155.  
Mysticism, Newman's opposition to, 18.  
Mysticism, Value of, 39.  
Mysticism and Idealism, 494 seq., 457.  
Mysticism and Agnosticism, 435.  
Mysticism and Pantheism, 440-450, 464.  
Mysticism, Christian, 449.  
Mysticism of Plotinus, 450.  
Mysticism and Christianity, 463.  
Nature, Idea of, 59, 61, 91, 93, 98, 101, 126-9.  
Neo-platonism, Value of, 39.  
Neo-platonism, Origin of, 302, 315-316.  
Neo-platonism and Christianity, 316, 453.  
Neo-platonism, Doctrines of, 317 seq., 430, 450 seq.  
Neo-platonism, Influence of, on Augustine, 330 seq., 335, 342, 356, 360, 453.  
Neo-platonism and Ambrose, 330 seq.  
Neo-platonism and Pantheism, 454.  
Newman's theory of development, 9-24, 40.  
Nicolans Cusanus, Cosmogony of, 52-3.  
Optimism, 349, 456 seq.  
Origen and Aquinas, 381.  
Pantheism and Mysticism, 440 seq., 464.  
Pantheism and Neo-platonism, 454.  
Pantheism, Doctrines of, 454 seq., 464.  
Pantheism and Christianity, 464.  
Pantheism and Idealism, 440 seq., 456.  
Paul, St., Relation of, to Philosophy, 6, 154.  
Paul, St., and Philo, 233, 240-2.  
Paul, St., Allegorical method of, 233-4, 265-6.  
Paul, St., Theology of, 238-40, 249, 251, 253, 289, 292, 411, 462.  
Paul, St., on Gnosticism, 258-60.  
Paul, St., Philosophy of history of, 265, 434.  
Paul, St., and Augustine, 326.  
Paul, St., and Aquinas, 384.  
Pelagianism and Augustine, 344 seq., 358 seq.  
Personality, 103-5, 112-113.  
Pessimism, 45.  
Phenomena and noumena, 65-66, 78-88.  
Philip's defence of freedom, 297-8.  
Philo, Philosophy of, 193-251.  
Philo, Relation of, to Plato and Aristotle, 193-4, 198, 200.

## INDEX

- Philo and the Fourth Gospel, 195, 236-7, 242-5.  
 Philo, Allegorical method of, 198-200, 206-7, 217.  
 Philo and the Stoics, 200.  
 Philo and Spinoza, 215.  
 Philo and the Pythagoreans, 208, 219.  
 Philo and St. Paul, 233, 240-2.  
 Philo and *Hebrews*, 235.  
 Philo and Sir Wm. Hamilton, 243.  
 Philo and the Gnostics, 263, 265-6, 273.  
 Philo, Extracts from, *see* Appendix.  
 Philosophy and Life, 1.  
 Philosophy, Modern, Development of, 50.  
 Philosophy, Problem of, 75.  
 Philosophy, Greek, and Mythology, 315.  
 Philosophy and Theology, 369.  
 Physics, Kant's view of, 58-60.  
 Plato and Philo, 193, 198, 200.  
 Plato, Philosophy of, 201, 309, 264, 315.  
 Plato and Plotinus, 318.  
 Plato and Augustine, 338.  
 Plotinus, Philosophy of, 317 seq., 450 seq., 463.
- Reason, Comprehension of Infinite by, 17-24, 71, 78.  
 Reason and experience, 29-35.  
 Reason, Theoretical and Practical, 96-9.  
 Reason and Faith, 98, 367 seq., 466 seq.  
 Redemption, Doctrine of, 327, 344 seq., 350, 387 seq., 452.  
 Reformation, Influence of, 395 seq.  
 Religion, Nature of, 1-6, 12-16, 22-32, 45, 99, 147-8, 165-192, 352.  
 Religion, Philosophy of, 1-3, 49, 157-8, 168-9, 190-2.  
 Religion and Morality, 450 seq.  
 Renan's view of theology, 7.  
 Ritschl's idea of religion, 166, 190.
- Sabatier and Loisy, 42-44.  
 Sacraments, Doctrine of the, 349, 389 seq.  
 Scepticism, 45, 145, 315.  
 Schleiermacher's idea of religion, 12, 166, 190.  
 Scholasticism, 51, 52.  
 Scholasticism and Leibnitz, 491.  
 Science and religion, 25, 31-2, 173-4.  
 Science, History of, 50.  
 Science and philosophy, 84-5, 145-6.



## INDEX

485

- Theology, Problem of, 1-3.  
Theology and religion, 15-16, 168-9,  
190-192.  
Theology, Value of, 49, 157-8.  
Theology and Philosophy, 398.  
Theology, Post-Reformation, 398-  
400.  
Theology, Natural and Revealed,  
424 seq.  
Theology, Development of, 430.  
Thomas Aquinas and his age, 24,  
365.  
Thomas Aquinas and Augustine, 362,  
368, 388.  
Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, 366-  
370, 373-375.  
Thomas Aquinas, Philosophy and  
Theology of, 362 seq.  
Thomas Aquinas and Anselm, 367,  
377.  
Thomas Aquinas and Kant, 377.  
Thomas Aquinas and Origen, 381.  
Thomas Aquinas and St. Paul, 384,  
395.  
Thomas Aquinas and Porphyry, 386.
- Thomas Aquinas, Harnack on, 390.  
Time, Philosophy of, 60, 79, 128,  
212-213, 339 seq., 358.  
Trinity, Doctrine of the, 332 seq.,  
353 seq., 378 seq., 401 seq., 412.  
Truth, Nature of, 10, 16, 17, 23, 38-9,  
41, 44-5, 158-164, 406 seq., 424  
seq.  
Universe as self-complete, 130.  
Valentinus and Philo, 269.  
Valentinus and Spinoza, 269.  
Valentinus, Philosophy of, 269-270,  
279-281.  
Valentinus, Followers of, 291.  
Virtues, List of, 232-3, 251.  
Ward, W., on Authority, 24-40,  
46-7.  
Will, Nature of, 374, 417.  
Will, Freedom of, 374.  
*Wisdom of Solomon*, Allegorical  
method of, 200.







